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Your Key to Success: Administrator's Guide to Raising Alberta's High School Completion Rate

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This resource is intended for:

Teachers	✓
Administrators	✓
Counsellors	✓
Students	
Parents	✓
Community Partners	✓
General Public	

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Table of Contents

I. **INTRODUCTION** 1

Connecting Early School Leaving and Early Childhood Development 1
Risk and Protective Factors 3
Strategies to Improve School Success 4
Alberta Education Business Plan Goals 6
Accountability and Measurement 6
Purpose of the Manual 7

II. **HIGHLIGHTS OF ALBERTA LITERATURE REVIEW FINDINGS** 9

Removing Barriers to High School Completion 9
High School Completion in Alberta 9
High School Completion Task Force *10*
High School Completion: Your Future Starts Here Symposium *10*
Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) 11
Success in School for Children and Youth in Care 12
Alberta School Boards Association 13
High School Completion Longitudinal Study 14
Summary *14*
Highlights *14*

III. **LEADING AND SUSTAINING CHANGE** 19

Synopsis of Literature 19
Leading and Sustaining Change Rubric 26
Staff Development Rubric 38

IV. **PERSONALIZED LEARNING** 42

Synopsis of Literature 42
Key Tenets of Personalized Learning 42
Cycles of Inquiry 43
Personalized Learning Rubric 48

V. **SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS** 54

Synopsis of Literature 54
Successful Transitions Rubric 58

VI. **COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS** 60

Synopsis of Literature 60
Service Learning 61
Wraparound Approach to Service Delivery 64
Increasing School Success for Children/Youth in Care 66
Collaborative Partnerships Rubric 71

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VII. **POSITIVE CONNECTIONS** 73

Synopsis of Literature 73
Mentoring 74
Resiliency 80
Positive Connections Rubric 86

VIII. **TRACKING PROGRESS** 90

Synopsis of Literature 90

IX. **TOOLS** 94

Tool 1: Early Warning Checklist for Vulnerable Children and Youth 96
Tool 2: Student Exit Survey 98
Tool 3: Leading Change Planning Guide 102
Tool 4: Instructional Leadership Staff Survey 108
Tool 5: Effective Transitions Checklist 110
Tool 6: School–Community Partnership Perception Check 112
Tool 7: Checklist for Developing an Aboriginal Mentoring Program 114
Tool 8: Student Engagement Survey 116

X. **HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION PORTFOLIO FRAMEWORK** 118

XI. **AISI: EXAMPLES OF HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION PROJECTS** 119

XII. **WEB SITES** 134

Government of Alberta Web Sites *134*
Other Web Sites *134*

XIII. **REFERENCES CITED** 136

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1. Introduction

Increasingly, Alberta school jurisdictions and schools are examining and implementing new strategies to increase high school completion rates. Students in schools are reflective of the communities in which they reside and their knowledge, skills, talents, energy and aspirations continue to shape the development and prosperity of these communities. It is, therefore, necessary for school jurisdictions and schools to work in partnership with the community to support children, youth, parents and families at the preschool level, while enrolled in the K–12 system and beyond.

> *Transforming education from a craft to a profession is the greatest challenge school and district leaders face. Above all, "professionalizing" education means creating ongoing opportunities for discussion of problems of practice at every level in the organization. It is only through such discussion that we can collaboratively create new knowledge about how to continuously improve learning, teaching and leadership. (Wagner 2004)*

CONNECTING EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Evidence from the literature within health, education and child welfare domains all show the importance and impact of family engagement, early childhood experiences and education, literacy development and integrated service planning in supporting students to be successful at learning. A series of brief summaries of the scientific presentations at the National Symposium on Early Childhood Science and Policy focus on supporting the healthy development of children and incorporate research from the neurosciences. The following are some key points as outlined in Harvard University's *In brief: The science of early childhood development* (p. 1):

- "The basic principles of neuroscience indicate that early preventive intervention will be more efficient and produce more favourable outcomes than remediation later in life.
- A balanced approach to emotional, social, cognitive and language development will best prepare all children for success in school and later in the workplace and community.
- Supportive relationships and positive learning experiences begin at home but also can be provided through a range of services with proven effectiveness factors. Babies' brains require stable, caring, interactive relationships with adults—any way or any place they can be provided will benefit healthy brain development.
- Science clearly demonstrates that, in situations where toxic stress is likely, intervening as early as possible is critical to achieving the best outcomes. For children experiencing toxic stress, specialized early interventions are needed to target the cause of the stress and protect the child from its consequences."

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Early childhood experiences lay the foundation for later success at school and in life although research also indicates that supports to vulnerable students throughout their years of schooling are effective with stronger results found with earlier intervention.

A review of the literature in North America indicates successful programs and services designed to increase high school completion rates are based on the premise that schools cannot resolve this issue on their own; it takes a collaborative holistic community effort. Many of those young people who drop out of school have struggled to overcome significant adversity including family dysfunction, poverty, school failure, frequent school moves, cultural disconnections, learning difficulties, disengagement and social isolation.

Dialogue with students who drop out of school indicates that no single event or reason provides a complete explanation. In *The Silent Epidemic Perspective of High School Dropouts*, Bridgeland et al (2006, pp. iii, v) state that most early leavers identify lack of connection to the school environment, difficulty seeing the relevance of curriculum to their lives, lack of motivation, past failures, the need to support their families, getting a job or becoming a parent as reasons for dropping out of school. They also identify attendance patterns as significant precursors to early school leaving.

The literature on early school leaving prevention provides clear examples of effective school improvement programming and strategies that significantly increase the rate of high school completion. Most effective in increasing student success and high school completion rates are evidence-informed and strategically planned and implemented multi-layered programs and supports.

Commonly cited strategies (Martin & Halperin 2006, pp. 1–9) include the following:

- multiple pathways to obtaining high school diplomas, including flexibility of scheduling, course offerings, and entry and exit points
- partnerships with parents, community agencies and post-secondary institutions
- remediation or second chance opportunities to get or make up coursework
- strong career connections and service-learning opportunities that match students interests and aspirations, and create opportunities for talent development
- caring connections to educators and peers.

The literature on prevention of early school leaving is aligned with research on school improvement. Adapted from Shannon & Bylsma (2007, pp. 3–4), common indicators include:

- clear, focused and specific goals related to student achievement and learning as the most important focus of schools and school jurisdictions
- emphasis on high standards and expectations for students
- effective school and jurisdiction leadership, with a strong focus on instructional leadership

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- multi-layered strategic planning for system-wide, aligned, comprehensive system change
- acceptance of personal responsibility for improving student learning matched with support from those with the delegated responsibility
- use of data to guide improvement strategies, practices and evaluation
- high levels of communication, engagement and partnering with parents and the community
- a rigorous curriculum with authentic and multi-layered school-based assessment supported by provincial standards and standardized testing
- focused professional development
- frequent monitoring of student progress and the acquisition of learner outcomes
- engaging and personalized learning environments that support student learning.

Research has shown that students leave school early for a variety of cumulative reasons involving individual, family, peer, school and community factors, many of which are amenable to intervention. A student's decision to leave school early is a personal one that reflects his or her unique life circumstances and often is taken following a slow process of disengagement from school. A risk factor or factors that might influence one student's decision to leave school early may not influence another student to make this decision. Risk factors, although not always predictive of early school leaving, are helpful in identifying students who may benefit from intervention.

RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Any discussion related to high school completion needs to be premised on the school and school jurisdiction's ability to identify and systematically provide supports to students who are at risk. Research identifies a number of risk and protective factors that may provide guidance to school jurisdictions and schools planning strategies to increase high school completion. See the following tables adapted from the National Dropout Prevention Centre (2007, pp. 1–36, 61–62).

Individual Risk and Protective Factors

Risk	*Protective*
Medical conditions	Treatment and specialized services
Disabilities that impact learning	Access to special education services and supports
Psychological/mental health problems	Access to mental health/behavioural assessment and intervention
Adjustment/temperament problems	Relationship and structure to maximize learning and successful functioning Direct instruction related to problem solving and prosocial skill development
Belonging to minority groups impacted by poverty; limited English language proficiency	Staff understanding, inclusion and active valuing of cultural differences
Male gender	
Dissatisfaction/alienation/hostility; low attachment to school	Positive relationships with teachers and other adults; personalized learning to build on talents, strengths and interests

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Family Risk and Protective Factors	
Risk	*Protective*
Poverty	Adequate finances to support family
High mobility resulting in school moves	Not more than three school moves
Low educational levels of parents	
Large number of siblings or siblings that do not complete high school	Family members who have completed high school and who value completion
Living apart from parents; abusive caretaking; family dysfunction	Nurturing, stable and supportive home
Low expectations for achievement	Family members who believe in the importance of education and who have high, realistic expectations for achievement
Adult responsibilities; inadequate child care	Support for teen parents; responsibilities commensurate with age; high-quality child care
Exposure or participation in high-risk behaviours	Treatment; support services that are asset based and build on strengths tailored to meet individual needs

School Risk and Protective Factors	
Risk	*Protective*
Poor quality instruction	High-quality instruction that is personalized to meet individual needs
Lack of school engagement	Welcoming school climate; engagement in school activities including extracurricular
Negative encounters with teachers; grade retention; suspensions/expulsions	Positive relationships with teachers and other adults in the school
Repeated failure; academic difficulty keeping up or completing homework	Experience of success related to achievement; support services to meet individual needs
Negative/high-risk peer connections or rejection by peers	Positive peer models

Community Risk and Protective Factors	
Risk	*Protective*
Community disorganization	Social infrastructure to meet community needs
Significant violence and/or drug activity	Safe and stable community
High demographic of minority or immigrant status	Accessible support services
Economic deprivation	Strong local economy

STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE SCHOOL SUCCESS

Alberta's K–12 education community is actively pursuing a variety of strategies to improve high school completion rates. See Section X for additional strategies in Alberta to improve high school completion success.

In Alberta Education's *Effective strategies to improve high school completion rates: A review of the literature* (2007, pp. 46–47) the review indicates that no single best practice model for prevention and intervention strategies exists or is necessarily appropriate. The lessons identified in the literature recommended that school jurisdictions/schools:

- implement multiple aligned strategies that address risk factors across several domains; i.e., implement evidence-based strategies that provide a combination of personal assets and skill building, academic support, family outreach, and environmental/organizational change to address individual, family, peer, school and community dimensions

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- tailor strategies to be broadly applicable and comprehensive yet flexible to meet the individual needs of students at-risk
- begin interventions early and as often, in a student's educational life, as there are warning signs
- fully implement evidence-based strategies as they were designed, being careful to look critically at what was done, with whom, where, with what outcomes and in what political or cultural context
- consider how other educational reforms (e.g., accountability, high academic standards and school restructuring) might influence implementation
- ensure strong support from parents and the wider community
- ensure that strong supporting legal, policy and institutional structures are in place
- determine what success will look like and develop measures to provide feedback on achievement of positive outcomes by:
  - developing a shared vision and plan of action though coordinated, collaborative leadership that considers multiple stakeholder perspectives
  - using data-driven decision-making
  - ensuring evidence-based programs are implemented, routinely monitored and evaluated
  - encouraging consistent family and community engagement
  - creating inviting, warm and supportive school climates
  - ensuring there are comprehensiveness, multi-dimensional and readily available academic, social, health and other personal resources and supports to meet students' diverse needs, interests, hopes and plans for the future
  - having effective early warning systems that trigger early multiple interventions
  - implementing supportive discipline and attendance policies
  - employing effective instructional practices that provide students with experiences of success, the necessary scaffolding and a variety of group learning opportunities
  - ensuring instruction is personalized, academically challenging, engaging and relevant
  - providing opportunities for students to develop strong positive personal relationships with caring adults
  - providing ongoing focused professional development.

The National Dropout Prevention Centre identifies the following effective strategies (adapted from Smink & Reimer 2002, p. 1) to boost high school completions rates:

1. Alternative schooling
2. Career education/workforce readiness
3. Community collaboration
4. Early childhood education
5. Family engagement
6. Instructional technology
7. Individualized instruction
8. In-school support services
9. Learning styles/multiple intelligences
10. Mentoring/tutoring
11. Out-of-school programs
12. Personal planning
13. Personalized learning
14. Professional development
15. Reading/writing programs
16. Review and evaluation strategies
17. Service-learning
18. Student leadership
19. Systematic identification of at-risk students
20. Systemic renewal
21. Violence prevention/conflict resolution

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Richman et al (2004, p. 151) identify the following five primary areas of resiliency that are effective in promoting school success:

- ensuring that students feel connected to their schools and demonstrate social competence in interactions with adults and peers
- giving students autonomy and a sense of self-efficacy that includes impulse control and decision-making over their learning
- assisting students in developing a sense of purpose related to learning along with reasonable goals
- creating healthy expectations and internal locus of control
- sustaining a safe and welcoming learning environment that includes keeping students safe from bullying, and ensuring nurturing relationships with caring and supportive adults.

ALBERTA EDUCATION BUSINESS PLAN GOALS

Alberta is recognized as a world educational leader based on student achievement on international tests and provincial measures. This success is the result of a rigorous and well-designed curriculum, specialized teaching and high-quality learning resources, the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement, a well-designed data exchange related to accountability pillar measures and, perhaps most importantly, dedicated and well-trained teachers and administrators.

Completion of high school is a fundamental building block on which other educational and life goals are built, so when students do not complete high school the toll on the quality of their individual lives is significant. While approximately three-quarters of Alberta's youth successfully finish high school, some others do not.

Recognizing the importance of high school completion, Alberta Education has identified a long-term goal for students to complete high school within five years of starting Grade 10. In 2005–2006, the actual rate stood at 78.6%. The targets for the 2008–2009, 2009–2010, 2010–2011, and 2011–2012 years are 79%, 80%, 81% and 82% respectively.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND MEASUREMENT

Alberta's Accountability Pillar is designed to measure improvement as well as achievement and to provide three and five-year comparators of results for provincial schools and school jurisdictions. The Pillar provides the foundation of an evaluation framework that supports educational leaders, staff, students, parents and the community in measuring outcomes attained using a mix of qualitative and quantitative measures that are consistent over time.

Schools and school jurisdictions can analyze these data sets, include other local measures to identify effective practices and programs, celebrate success and determine where specific improvement is required so that strategic priorities can be aligned, planned, implemented and evaluated based on their impact on student achievement and success.

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To assist in the improvement process, *Supporting continuous improvement in schools: A toolkit* provides superintendents and school principals with tools to assist in data gathering in particular areas, analysis of results and development of specific improvement strategies. Also, the newly created Accountability Pillar Clearinghouse is accessible via the Extranet to support school authorities in their work toward continuous system improvement.

PURPOSE OF THE MANUAL

As in any system, the need for continuous improvement also is noted in specific areas such as high school completion rates. To assist Alberta school jurisdictions in developing and successfully implementing high school completion plans that boost high school completion rates, Section III on leading and sustaining change is followed by five areas for action: 1) personalized learning, 2) successful transitions, 3) collaborative partnerships, 4) positive connections, and 5) tracking progress.

The manual contains the following sections:

Section I Introduction
Section II Highlights of Alberta Literature Review Findings
Section III Leading and Sustaining Change
Section IV Personalized Learning
Section V Successful Transitions
Section VI Collaborative Partnerships
Section VII Positive Connections
Section VIII Tracking Progress and Improving Results
Section IX Tools
Section X High School Completion Portfolio Framework
Section XI ASU Examples of High School Completion Projects
Section XII Web
Section XIII Resources Used

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II. Highlights of Alberta Literature Review Findings

The best insight is vision.
(Malcolm Forbes)

According to Alberta Education's *Effective strategies to improve high school completion rates: A review of the literature* (2007, pp. 47–48), it is important to track local, national and global trends to support the business planning that assists school jurisdictions and schools in anticipating future learning needs of students. Jurisdictions and schools need to stay abreast of current trends and consider the implications of these trends for education, including:

- demographic changes; e.g., increasing cultural diversity, shifts in the age of the majority
- changes in the labour market and workplace; e.g., increasing value of the global knowledge/information worker, increasing demands on teachers
- changes in education brought about by the needs and preferences of the 21st century learner; e.g., increasing personalization, increasing demand for innovative thinking, preparing students for career adaptability versus specific careers, increasing demand for continuous improvement
- changes in societal values and structures; e.g., increasing diversity of family structures, incidence of households living in poverty, racial and ethnic diversity, values shifts resulting in the need for personal meaning versus personal accomplishment
- changes influenced by emerging technologies; e.g., enhanced global communications.

REMOVING BARRIERS TO HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION

The *Removing Barriers to High School Completion Study* investigates the causes of early school leaving and proposes a strategic plan to improve the completion rate. The study was initiated in March 2000 and released in September 2001. It included an extensive review of the literature, an analysis of student information system data maintained by Alberta Education (formerly Alberta Learning), 21 focus groups throughout the province and, consultation with a panel of resource people who had recent research or field experience in the area. The study was coordinated by an interdivisional and interdepartmental committee with various Alberta ministries represented. The report is useful for school and school jurisdiction planning and designing programs that focus on increasing high school completion rates.

HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION IN ALBERTA

Alberta Education's high school completion task force findings, the input from participants at the High School Completion: Your Future Starts Here Symposium, the recommendations of the Alberta School Boards Association and findings in literature align with much of what researchers and educators are saying about successful action areas to address high school completion.

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High School Completion Task Force

Alberta's *High School Completion Task Force Report* (2005, pp. 4–13) made 25 recommendations related to each of five categories (i.e., Success for All Students; Classroom and School Climate; Career Exploration and Planning; Student Supports; and Research and Ongoing Improvement Initiatives), which included, but were not limited, to the following:

Personalized Learning	• improve the relevancy and sequencing of provincial high school curricula to meet learners' needs, aspirations and interests and encourage post-secondary institutions to review and modify their entry requirements in certain subjects
Successful Transitions	• ensure that curriculum and funding are available for schools to work with students to come to know themselves (abilities and interests) and engage in meaningful and timely career development planning with staff which may include trained career counsellors
Collaborative Partnerships	• work with other government departments and industry to expand the range of credentialed occupations • review and evaluate integrated service models for effectiveness in providing coordinated services
Positive Connections	• engage at-risk students in dialogue about issues that impact high school completion
Tracking Progress	• investigate, implement and share research and effective practices for improving high school completion rates for at-risk populations, including First Nations, Métis and Inuit students • assess and monitor school culture with respect to inclusiveness, diversity, equity and human rights • gauge the effects of existing and proposed policies on high school completion rates.

High School Completion: Your Future Starts Here Symposium

In 2006, the Alberta Government launched the "Your Future Starts Here" Initiative, which involved a series of youth roundtables across the province, an online survey open during the summer to all interested Albertans, and Alberta's first ever High School Completion Symposium in September 2006. As stated in the *Summary Report on Alberta Education's high school completion symposium* (2006), a key purpose of the Symposium was to identify the factors that influence youth and their decision to leave high school. The Symposium feedback affirmed that:

- there is no single reason students leave high school prior to completion (p. 1)
- non-completion is neither a snap decision nor is it related solely to what is happening at school (p. 1)
- leaving school is a process that begins long before a student enters high school (p. 1)
- youth are less likely to leave school when they are in stable, well-supported environments (p. 12)
- it takes the collective effort of all stakeholders (e.g., parents, teachers, administrators, business leaders, post-secondary institutions, members of the community and the public) to help more youth complete high school (p. 12).

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In Alberta Education's *Summary Report* (2006, pp. 4–11) the following suggestions for actions were put forward:

- parents indicated that they needed to be better connected with their children; e.g., becoming more involved through regular meetings with teachers and participating in school council activities
- youth identified the need to be more mutually supportive within their peer groups, to be proactive in raising concerns that they may have, and to have clearly outlined and frequently reinforced expectations with limits and rules
- superintendents and trustees suggested focusing on a healthy school climate, setting requirements for student-counsellor ratios, and providing teacher training
- educators' suggested enhancing the teacher–student relationship and early identification strategies, improving academic flexibility and options, adapting teaching practices, and increasing cooperation and communication between schools, community organizations and businesses
- community groups suggested building closer partnerships and relationships with educational stakeholders as well as providing informational programs
- post-secondary institutions suggested coordinating with schools, government and professional development organizations to improve teachers' abilities to adapt their teaching approaches to match students' learning styles, and increasing awareness of career options and preparation
- the business sector suggested supporting high school completion initiatives in their communities as well as communicating and demonstrating their unified belief in the importance of an educated and qualified workforce.

ALBERTA INITIATIVE FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT (AISI)

AISI was developed through a collaborative partnership of Alberta Education, the Alberta School Councils' Association, the Alberta School Boards Association, the Association of Business Officials of Alberta, the Alberta Teachers' Association, the College of School Superintendents, and Faculties of Education (University of Alberta, University of Calgary, University of Lethbridge, Campus Saint-Jean). The purpose of AISI is to improve student learning and performance by fostering initiatives that reflect the unique needs and circumstances of each school authority. By encouraging teachers, parents and the community to work collaboratively to introduce innovative and creative school improvement projects, based upon local needs, student learning and performance is enhanced.

Alberta Education's *High School Completion AISI Provincial Research Review Report (*2008), based on 18 high-performing Cycle 2 (2003–2006) AISI projects, concluded that "there is sufficient evidence to suggest that, by attending to the social/psychological needs of each student such as developing strong interpersonal connections between students, peers, teacher and parents; providing counselling services; creating mentorship programs and alliances and then shifting toward academic needs (e.g., tutoring services, flexible programming, differentiated instruction), early school leaving can be prevented (p. 27)." The full report is available on Alberta Education's AISI Web site. Also, see Section XI for additional information about 104 high school completion projects.

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SUCCESS IN SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CARE

Alberta Education and Alberta Children and Youth Services share a joint interest and mandate in improving high school completion and success in school for children and youth in care. In order to track school outcomes, including Provincial Achievement Test results, high school completion and dropout/return rates, Alberta Education and Children and Youth Services entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to allow for data matching of children and youth in care in school to determine their educational outcomes compared to all Alberta students. Children and youth in care are one of the most educationally vulnerable groups. They comprise about 1% of all students in Alberta and data from the province indicates they have significantly lower high school completion rates than their peers. This pattern of underachievement also is noted in Grades 3, 6 and 9 Provincial Achievement Test results.

Consultations in Alberta with children and youth in care and stakeholder groups indicate that:

- children and youth in care often feel stigmatized, labelled and disconnected
- children and youth in care have special academic, emotional and behavioural needs as a result of adverse life experiences including trauma and abuse
- lack of teamwork, information sharing, communication and planning among caseworkers, school staff and caregivers contributes to poor school results for children and youth in care
- placement changes for children and youth in care leads to school changes, feelings of disconnection and lack of stability, which adversely affects success in school.

In Alberta, a partnership was formed between the ministries of Education and Children and Youth Services to develop a draft Provincial Protocol Framework (PPF) to improve outcomes for children and youth in care. The primary purpose of the PPF is to provide consistency of practice between educators and child intervention workers and their partners by outlining essential protocol requirements as the foundation for the development and implementation of PPF regional agreements across Alberta. The agreements will allow partners to customize the PPF requirements to address the local needs within the various school authorities and child and family services authorities or Delegated First Nations Agencies (should they choose to participate). The Ministries will ensure there are:

- mechanisms to track and monitor school outcomes of children and youth in care
- processes to monitor the effectiveness of the regional agreements
- procedures to receive and respond to information from the partners related to policies, regulations or practices at the ministry levels, which result in barriers to support school success for children and youth in care
- processes for ongoing tracking of school outcomes at the aggregate level
- opportunities to determine additional data collection at the local level.

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ALBERTA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

In *How to improve Alberta's high school completion rates: Insights from Alberta's school trustees*, a document prepared by the Alberta School Boards Association (2006, p. 2), several actions are summarized that school board trustees considered most important in improving high school completion rates. These actions are to:

- improve guidance counselling and coordinated delivery of multi-agency and school-based services, including exit interviews with students leaving school
- promote the importance of education and the risks associated with leaving school early to work
- improve relevancy and sequencing of provincial curricula to better meet the needs, aspirations and interests of students
- advocate for review of and possible modifications to the post-secondary entrance requirements
- ensure each at-risk student has an opportunity for a relationship with one caring adult in the school
- ensure actions to improve high school completion rates involve cross-ministry cooperation
- provide students with opportunities for meaningful and timely career development planning with trained career counsellors.

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HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION LONGITUDINAL STUDY

Summary

The purpose of this study is to contribute to evidence-based decision-making at a district, school and system level to improve high school completion. Specifically, the study examines how longitudinal school-based data can be further enriched and utilized to track and understand student progress and to:

- understand the dynamics of key contributing factors at various stages of students' high school completion process
- identify and address gaps in the available Alberta evidence
- focus collaborative cross-disciplinary research and interagency effort to improve completion rates
- stimulate value-added information exchanges within the education system.

The results of the study can be utilized by jurisdiction and school administrators, teachers, education stakeholders, policy makers, researchers and the broader community.

Highlights

(The following information is taken from Alberta Education's *High School Completion Longitudinal Study Highlights* document found at http://education.alberta.ca/media/1079010/hschighlights_final.pdf.)

Scenario:

Principal Smith was not expecting a visit from Mrs. Jones, the mother of Rachelle, a Grade 5 student at Horse Head Nebula Elementary School, but she was in his office waiting impatiently and she seemed upset. Principal Smith didn't know why Mrs. Jones was there, but he suspected it was about an apparent personality conflict between the Grade 5 teacher, Ms. Green, and Rachelle. "Once again," Mrs. Jones began, "Rachelle has been insulted by Ms. Green, and I am not going to tolerate this anymore. I have arranged to transfer Rachelle to the school down the street." Principal Smith assured Mrs. Jones that if they worked together with Ms. Green and Rachelle that any conflict could be resolved, but Mrs. Jones was adamant and insisted on the transfer. Principal Smith intuitively knew this decision was not in the best interests of Rachelle, but he did not have any research-based evidence he could use to try to convince Mrs. Jones to change her mind.

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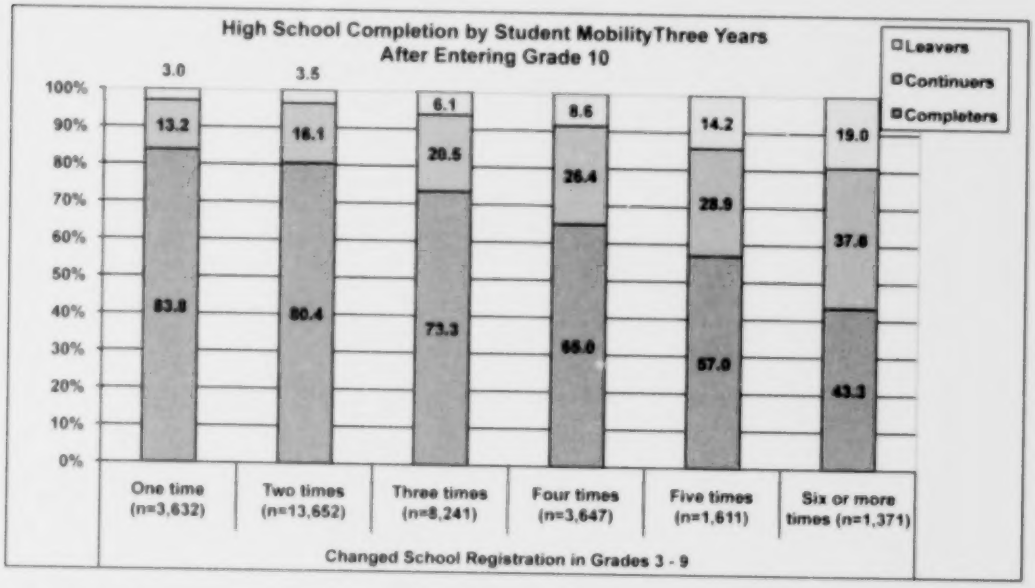
The latter scenario describes a situation that could well contribute to Rachelle having a reduced probability of completing high school. Research, based on extensive Alberta data that tracked students from Grade 3 to four years after entering Grade 10, was recently completed by Alberta Education. This study, among other factors, clearly demonstrates that school mobility or the number of school registrations a student experiences over the course of schooling increases the probability of leaving school before graduation (refer to the graph below).



Note: Each total column represents the overall number (100%) of students in a particular mobility category. The sections of the columns are percentages of leavers, continuers and completers within each category.

The purpose of this longitudinal study is to contribute to the Alberta High School Completion Initiative by conducting a concurrent, comprehensive large-scale analysis of provincial Student Information System data and other data sources (e.g., Statistics Canada 2001 census data), in order to better understand the local contexts and factors pertinent to high school completion and inform policies and programs directed at helping students complete high school.

The findings presented in the report are based on the cohort of 32,721 Alberta students who started Grade 3 in 1995–1996 and entered Grade 10 in 2002–2003. The report can be used as a wide-ranging reference source for education practitioners who are looking for evidence-based information to support the policies and strategies targeting high school completion at a school, jurisdiction or provincial level. Examples of such practical usages include scanning and evaluating educational environments, and identifying optimal school size, program type, and other potential applications such as gaining insight into factors associated with high school completion.

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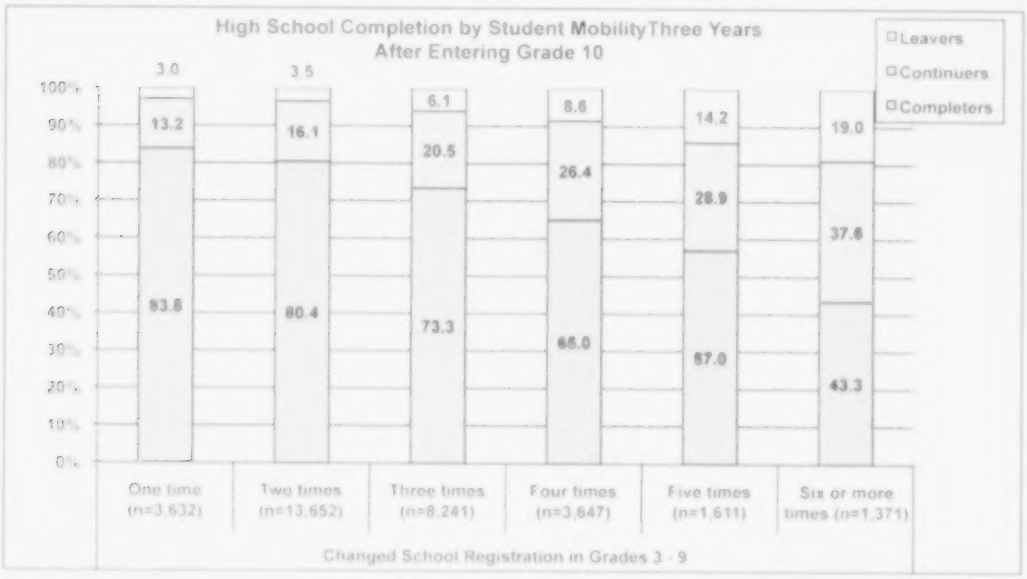
The latter scenario describes a situation that could well contribute to Rachelle having a reduced probability of completing high school. Research, based on extensive Alberta data that tracked students from Grade 3 to four years after entering Grade 10, was recently completed by Alberta Education. This study, among other factors, clearly demonstrates that school mobility or the number of school registrations a student experiences over the course of schooling increases the probability of leaving school before graduation (refer to the graph below).



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The initial analysis, using bivariate statistics[1], supported the proposition that high school completion is a prolonged process rather than a single occurrence or event. For example, the data empirically illustrate the key importance of early school years (e.g., Grade 3) for student success at the secondary level (see the graph below), as well as challenges associated with being an English as a Second Language learner and/or student with special needs, especially during high school years.

Note: Each total column represents the overall number (100%) of students in a particular achievement category. The sections within each column are the percentages of leavers, continuers and completers.

Subsequent multiple regression statistical analysis also demonstrates that high school completion is a remarkably complex and dynamic process, which may entail interventions, priorities and supports depending on the stage of the high school completion process and types of potential completers and their specific needs. The multiple regression analysis resulted in identifying the following significant predictors for high school completion outcomes (after controlling for the effects of other predictors) three years after entering Grade 10 (see also the table on the following page):

- academic achievement (positive association)
- gifted coding (positive association)
- gender - female (positive association)
- students attending rural high schools or schools in small urban communities (negative association)
- average family income (positive association)
- average percent of families in owned dwelling (positive association)
- average total years of mother's education (positive association)

[1] Bivariate analysis involves examining the relationship between two variables (e.g., gender and high school completion) in order to determine if there is an empirical association between the two variables that can potentially affect the outcomes.

It should be cautioned that examining effects of independent variables one at a time, rather than controlling for the individual associations that each one has with all the other variables in the analysis, can result in misleading conclusions.

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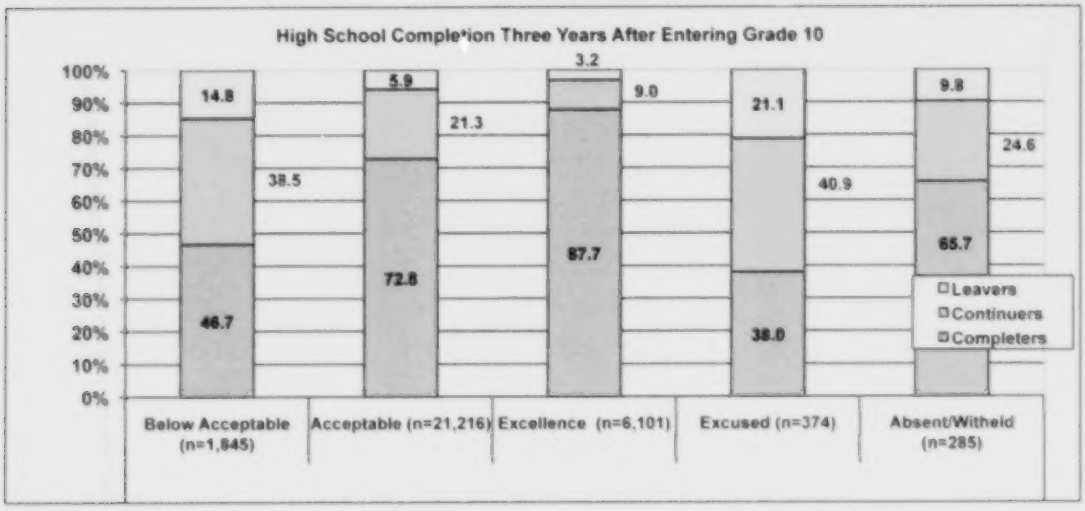

Note: Each total column represents the overall number (100%) of students in a particular achievement or absence category. The sections within each column are percentages of leavers, continuers and completers.

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- academic achievement (positive association)
- gifted coding (positive association)
- gender: female (positive association)
- students attending rural high schools or schools in small urban communities under 25,000 (positive association)
- average family income (positive association)
- average percent of families in owned dwelling (positive association)
- average total years of mother's education (positive association)

[1] Bivariate analysis involves examining one-on-one relationships between high school completion outcomes and each of the variables that can potentially affect these outcomes.

[2] It should be noted that after combined effects of all included predictors are controlled for in the multiple regression model, the individual associations that were observed as a result of bivariate analysis may change their relative strength or direction.

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- student mobility: cumulative number of changed school registrations prior to entering Grade 10 (negative association)
- student mobility: district/school change incident(s) after starting Grade 10 (negative association)
- special needs coding (negative association)
- larger jurisdiction size (negative association)
- schools proximity to economically expanding (oil) regions (negative association)
- schools proximity to colleges (negative association)
- average percent of lone parent families (negative association).

Model of Predictors of High School Completion (Multiple Regression Analysis)*

HSC Predictors	3yrs after Gr. 10	4yrs after Gr. 10
PAT : Math 9		
PAT: Math 9 – did not write		
Mobility: Number of changed registrations in grades 3–9		–
Mobility: Jurisdictions/schools changes in senior high		
Special needs: Severe codes in grades 3–9		–
Special needs: Mild/moderate in grades 3–9		
Special needs: Mild/moderate in grades 7–9 only		
Special needs: Mild/moderate in grades 3–6 only		–
Gifted in grades 3–9		–
ESL: any ESL codes assigned in grades 3–9	–	
Gender: female		–
Average years of teaching experience per teacher	–	–
Grade range	–	–
School size: total student population	–	–
Jurisdiction size: total student population		
Rural schools/schools in small (under 25,000) urban locales		–
Proximity to the booming oil production regions		–
Direct proximity to colleges (in the same community)		–
Direct proximity to universities (in the same community)	–	–
Average family income		–
Average percent of families in owned dwellings		–
Average total years of mother's education		
Average percent of lone parent families		–

*Green arrows ( ) represent statistically significant positive associations and orange arrows ( ) represent statistically significant negative associations.

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Analysis of the data on students who continued into the fourth year after entering Grade 10 resulted in an unanticipated finding that many of the previously noted variables (predictors) did not contribute to predicting the probability of high school completion at this stage. This finding argues for conducting data collection and analysis that specifically addresses high school completion for students who require extra time to complete. This may be an important starting point for developing evidence-based differentiated approaches to older students who try to complete high school after Grade 12. Further evidence should be generated to uncover the key factors that may enhance high school completion at these later stages.

The findings outlined in this report have clear practical implications for cross-disciplinary research, focused policy development and interagency interventions at a school, jurisdiction and system level. The full report discusses policy implications of the presented findings resulting from the study and suggests several recommendations for future data collection, research and practice to address high school completion issues. For example, consideration should be given to more comprehensively tracking student progress using variables that affect high school completion at different stages of their schooling in order to identify high-risk students, alert jurisdictions and support these students in completing school. A complete copy of this study may be obtained at http://education.alberta.ca/media/1079006/hscdataanalysis_report_final.pdf.

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III. Leading and Sustaining Change

SYNOPSIS OF LITERATURE

Conceptualizations of leadership have evolved over the years. Originally, effective leadership was viewed from a command and control perspective and capable leaders operated in isolation, making decisions and taking actions that were predicated on their vision and perspective. Neither school effectiveness research nor the belief in the efficacy of the charismatic leader provided evidence that this leadership model produced strong, sustained and significant results. In fact, changes in leadership sometimes meant that improvement initiatives were discontinued when a newly appointed principal or superintendent had different experiences and perceptions about what form and focus improvement efforts should take. "The belief in the power of the charismatic leader to single handedly turn around an ailing business or a failing school has been undermined by too many examples of heroic failure." (Berliner 2001; Bevan 2002 and MacBeath et al 2007 cited in MacBeath 2009, p.41)

As more people take on leadership roles within the school and jurisdiction, greater commitment, energy, knowledge (technical and situational) and influence are generated. Research on school improvement indicates that instructional leadership is the second most important determinant in sustained school improvement after the quality of instruction provided by teachers. In terms of teacher roles, their focus and perspective must assume responsibility for school improvement or achievement of identified priorities that reaches beyond the classroom.

> *A leader is given stewardship over assets, in the form of people, capital, information and technology. The leader's job is to make them more valuable and to keep making them more valuable in the future.*
> *(Noel Tichy)*

The importance of the school principal's role in creating the context and impetus for change within schools cannot be overstated. Central office administrators also play a critical role, particularly those whose role includes principal development, as formation of leadership learning communities of practice is foundational to system improvement. Administrators must now manage boundaries between multiple groups, delegate authority and ensure accountability commensurate with assigned tasks, while coordinating the work as it moves forward to ensure coherence.

In *Change leadership: A practical guide to transforming our schools*, Wagner & Kegan (2006, p. xvi) believe that "the successful leadership of transformational improvement processes in schools and districts requires [that] ... leaders need to learn how to take action effectively to help our organizations actually become what they need and want to be ... [and to] help ourselves become the persons we need and want to be in order to better serve the children and families of our communities."

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Schmoker (2006, p. 29) states that schools will not improve until school leaders begin to work collaboratively with teachers to oversee, in a meaningful way, instructional quality. This means that school and jurisdiction leaders must see authentic instructional leadership as critical, substantive and core to their role.

With the advent of school-based decision-making, an interest in distributed leadership arose. This is, in part, in recognition of the complexity of the education system and the need for schools and school jurisdictions to be adaptive, innovative and effective in creating and applying knowledge. There are many terms for shared leadership; e.g., distributed, democratic, dispersed and participative to name a few. Macbeath (2009, p. 45) discusses a small scale study in England funded by the National College of School Leadership, involving 11 schools in rural and urban settings that identified the following six forms of distributed leadership. (Whatever the form distributed leadership takes, trust and accountability are essential elements of this transaction.)

- Distributed formally—through officially designated roles such as administrative appointments.
- Distributed pragmatically—ad hoc through necessity or emergent need/circumstance.
- Distributed strategically—planned designation or delegation to strengthen/contribute to achievement of school goals or priorities or to meet emergent needs.
- Distributed incrementally—provision of leadership opportunities to staff as they demonstrate interest/capacity to lead.
- Distributed culturally—provision of leadership opportunities as part of the values, beliefs and school climate.
- Distributed opportunistically—staff that is competent and willing to assume leadership responsibilities extend their roles and responsibilities to do so.

Spillane (2006 cited in Spillane et al 2009, p. 93) analyzes leadership as comprised of two domains. First, that leadership and the management of schools involve many people, not just those officially designated to leadership positions; and secondly, that leadership practice is really the outcome of the interaction between school leaders, their followers and their situation.

Wagner & Kegan (2006, pp. 12, 13) identify the following three barriers to change that may be found in schools today:

- a *culture of reactivity* as educators struggle ... to meet multiple and sometimes fragmented or competing priorities ... [which can] negatively impact effective planning, implementation, achievement and sustainability of specified outcomes

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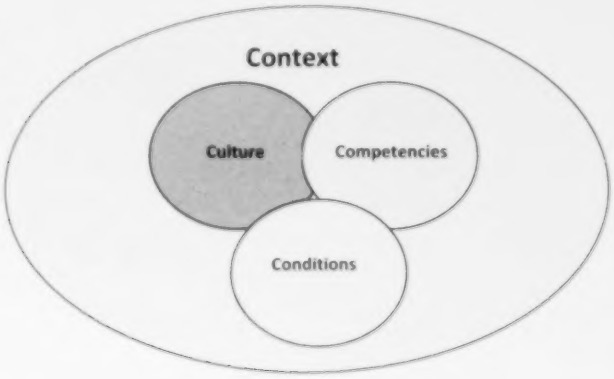
- a *culture of compliance* where "getting along" is valued more highly than challenging the status quo, even when current practice is not producing positive results and, in some cases, where surface or pseudo-compliance masks skepticism or cynicism and, in turn, undermines successful implementation of new initiatives or priorities
- a *culture of isolation and autonomy* within which teachers typically work; e.g., teachers do not frequently work as teams and, typically, teachers do not regularly observe their colleagues delivering instruction or receive peer inquiry/feedback as part of improvement efforts. ... The isolation ... results in prolonged inconsistency of practice, limited team learning, inconsistent exploration of effective practice and ineffectual support from colleagues.

Wagner & Kegan (2006) also identify Four C's of Change—culture, competencies, conditions and context—as the essential components to successful implementation of change initiatives. When leading change, whether it is envisioning, planning, implementing or evaluating change, the following Four C's of Change can be used to help strengthen the process.

- **Culture** (p. 102)—the set of "shared values, beliefs, expectations, assumptions and behaviours related to students and learning, teachers and teaching, instructional leadership and the quality of relationships within and beyond the school." In short, the mental models, both individual and collective, guide action and decision-making within the school community.
- **Competencies** (p. 99)—the "repertoire of skills and knowledge that influence student learning."
- **Conditions** (p. 101)—the "external architecture surrounding student learning;" e.g., scheduling of classes, provision of release time for teachers to work together, student–teacher ratios, the way transitions between grades are handled. Resources, defined roles and responsibilities, and policy and assessment practices also fit into the category of "conditions."
- **Context (**p. 104)—the skills and knowledge all students are expected to acquire to be successful learners, providers and citizens, including the aspirations or expectations that our communities have for our schools and the larger systems within which we work.



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Context

- Do we consistently seek to understand learner aspirations, talents and strengths?
- Do we actively seek to increase learner pathways to success?
- Are parent and community aspirations for schools being met?
- Do our school and jurisdiction goals align with provincial goals?
- Are priorities few in number and focused on student learner outcomes?
- Do we foster and support collaborative work teams and partnerships that go beyond the school?
- Are meetings focused on teaching and learning?

Culture

- What are the most important things we want all our students to know and be able to do to be successful learners, providers and citizens?
- What assumptions, values and beliefs will help us get there? Which values and beliefs will hamper our progress in achieving this goal?
- What evidence is available that demonstrates our commitment and belief that all students will be successful? What practices show this? What practices are incongruent with these beliefs? Examples of practices include assessment, discipline, inclusion, partnership, engagement and instructional.
- Do we have a shared vision of quality instruction?

Conditions

- Who owns this goal? What procedures need to be maintained, changed or eliminated to help us get to our goal?
- Are we able to resist pressures that are peripheral to our goal?
- Are we organized to accomplish our goals; e.g., class schedules, time with students, team planning, transitions?
- Is there a sense of urgency for improvement?
- Is there joint ownership throughout the system or school?
- Are people participating productively at meetings?
- Are assessment policies designed to measure student learning and knowledge or are they measuring ability to meet deadlines or something else?

Competencies

- Is our school or jurisdiction climate characterized by inquiry and respectful debate related to current practice or procedures to improve student learning?
- Are teachers and other staff participating on collaborative teams that identify a clear focus for improving student learning?
- Is instructional supervision adequate and effective?
- Do teachers and administrators actively participate as part of professional learning communities?
- Do people share practice problems at meetings?

Wagner & Kegan (2006, p. 135) state that other change levers essential to the change process include accountability, data and relationship. Accountability is a mutual understanding of what schools and school jurisdictions are responsible for and to whom; collective accountability ensures that shared commitment and reciprocity for specified outcomes is important. Data is quantitative and qualitative information gathering that is directly or indirectly related to student success and achievement. Relationship is established amongst all who work together to help students learn.

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Questions to Ponder about the Four C's of Change

Context

- Do we consistently seek to understand learner aspirations, talents and strengths?
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Change is not solely an intellectual exercise; in fact, building shared commitment to a compelling goal is, to a large part, an emotional investment of time, energy, talent and expertise. To gather the sense of urgency and momentum needed to effect change, people need to fully understand the reasons why the change is needed and become invested in playing their part in making this change. They need to feel they are valued and contributing members of the change process in order to build ownership in the preferred future they are helping to build.

IBM recently announced the results of a study, *Making change work*, involving 1500 change management executives from 15 countries. This 2008 study determined that nearly 60 percent of change projects fail to fully meet established objectives (p. 10). Interestingly, the most significant obstacles to success in implementing change were centered on people and culture. Sixty percent of the executives surveyed stated that changing mental models or mind sets/attitudes was the biggest challenge to overcome (p. 12). Forty-nine percent identified corporate culture as the second most difficult barrier to change (p. 12). Researchers identified the following four lessons learned from "Change Master" organizations that achieved success of 80 percent for their projects.

- **Real Insights, Real Actions** (p. 19)—Authors analyzed differences in approaches to change management and discovered there was a strong correlation between a realistic awareness of the challenges involved in change and successful change projects.
- **Solid Methods, Solid Benefits** (p. 22)—Authors noted that developing a consistent and structured approach to change management made a significant difference to the success of the project.
- **Better Skills, Better Change** (p. 27)—Researchers identified that engaging employees throughout the process in two-way communication was powerful in achieving success and that having dedicated and skilled change managers was vital to the process.
- **Right Investment, Right Impact** (p. 30)—Researchers discovered that, on average, organizations spent around 11 percent of the total change budget on change activities, but they invested strategically. This included investment in building awareness of project complexity, building change skills and developing long-term tools, methods and capacities.

To successfully and strategically plan and execute needed change, the first critical task is to define the problem that needs to be solved. As it relates to high school completion, whether from an elementary, junior or senior high school perspective, defining and refining the problem and identifying the barriers and enablers that maintain the problem, sets the foundation for the clarity and focus needed to effect the needed change. The layering of the following questions may serve as an illustration of this process.

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(adapted from Wagner & Kegan 2006)

Questions to Ask (pp. 18–19)	**Refining your Questions**
What do you see as the greatest challenge you face relative to improving high school completion rates in your school or jurisdiction? What is the most important problem you are trying to solve?	• How clearly does the problem statement acknowledge the quality of instruction and its relationship to student learning? (p. 26) • What do you anticipate will be the impact on instructional practice if your problem is solved? (p. 26) • Name the links that connect your goal to the results you seek.
What structural or organizational changes do you need to make to solve this problem? What practices, structures, processes or policies need to change in classrooms, schools and the jurisdiction to solve this problem?	• What current practices are getting in the way of solving this problem? • What current practices need to be maintained, adjusted or strengthened to solve the problem and who needs to be part of the team focused on identifying and implementing changes? • Do your meetings focus on an effective instruction model? • What data will be collected to gauge progress or success in solving the problem? Is the data (qualitative and quantitative) disaggregated so it is meaningful and is it available to all?
What organizational and individual beliefs associated with this problem may need to change? Begin with your own.	• What are the values, beliefs and assumptions that underlie current practices at odds with solving the problem? • Do you have a shared vision of good teaching and beliefs that all students can be successful? (p. 29) • Are values, beliefs and assumptions aligned and do all members of the school staff agree on these?
What are the implications for leadership at your level in solving this problem? What might you have to do differently?	• Are current practices maintaining or enabling the problem to continue? • What will you need to change, stop or do more of to solve the problem? • Who do you need to recruit to help champion the change needed to solve the problem? Who is likely to resist and why? What actions will you need to take to increase buy-in and ownership within the school community for the changes needed to solve the problem?

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Defining the Problem that needs to be solved

(adapted from Wagner & Kegan 2006)

Questions to Ask (pp. 18–19)	**Refining your Questions**
What do you see as the greatest challenge you face relative to improving high school completion rates in your school or jurisdiction? What is the most important problem you are trying to solve?	• How clearly does the problem statement acknowledge the quality of instruction and its relationship to student learning? (p. 26) • What do you anticipate will be the impact on instructional practice if your problem is solved? (p. 26) • Name the links that connect your goal to the results you seek.
What structural or organizational changes do you need to make to solve this problem? What practices, structures, processes or policies need to change in classrooms, schools and the jurisdiction to solve this problem?	• What current practices are getting in the way of solving this problem? • What current practices need to be maintained, adjusted or strengthened to solve the problem and who needs to be part of the team focused on identifying and implementing changes? • Do your meetings focus on an effective instruction model? • What data will be collected to gauge progress or success in solving the problem? Is the data (qualitative and quantitative) disaggregated so it is meaningful and is it available to all?
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Wagner & Kegan (2006, pp. 33–34) identified the following as a useful tool to gauge the need for change.

Seven Disciplines for Strengthening Instruction Diagnostic

The diagnostic tool below can help you assess how the seven disciplines show up in your own school or district. We encourage you to first fill out the diagnostic individually and then compare results with your colleagues, holding discussion among yourselves until you've had a chance to each respond individually. The discussion that follows will clarify your understanding of the disciplines themselves and almost certainly identify the most promising areas for further work in your school or district. We also encourage you not to skip over the identification of evidence. These indicators can be the most powerful discussion prompts and build a shared idea of what is, and what needs to be.

The diagnostic can be used with different groups—principals and teachers and central office administrators—to see what degree there are differences in views that can be usefully explored. The diagnostic can also be given periodically as an informal assessment of progress.

Name _____ District _____

1. The district/school creates *understanding and urgency* around improving ALL students' learning for teachers and community, and they regularly report on progress.
   - Data is disaggregated and transparent to everyone.
   - Qualitative (focus groups and interviews) as well as quantitative data is used to understand students' and recent graduates' experience of school.

   Not yet started 1 2 3 4 well-established in our school/district
   Evidence:

2. There is a *widely shared vision of what is good teaching*, which is focused on rigorous expectations, relevant curricula, and respectful relationships in the classroom.

   Not yet started 1 2 3 4 well-established in our school/district
   Evidence:

3. *All adult meetings are about instruction* and are models of good teaching.

   Not yet started 1 2 3 4 well-established in our school/district
   Evidence:

4. *There are well-defined standards and performance assessments for student work at all grade levels.* Both teachers and student understand what quality work looks like, and there is consistency in standards of assessment.

   Not yet started 1 2 3 4 well-established in our school/district
   Evidence:

5. *Supervision is frequent, rigorous, and entirely focused on the improvement of instruction.* It is done by people who know what good teaching looks like.

   Not yet started 1 2 3 4 well-established in our school/district
   Evidence:

6. *Professional development is primarily onsite, intensive, collaborative and job-embedded* and is designed and led by educators who model best teaching and learning practices.

   Not yet started 1 2 3 4 well-established in our school/district
   Evidence:

7. *Data is used diagnostically at frequent intervals* by teams of teachers to assess each student's learning and to identify the most effective teaching practices. Teams have time built into their schedules for this shared work.

   Not yet started 1 2 3 4 well-established in our school/district
   Evidence:

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LEADING AND SUSTAINING CHANGE RUBRIC

Creating Compelling Vision/improvement Plan

Not Evident	Emerging	Evident	Exemplary
☐ Leaders are not familiar with research/theory related to the relationship between vision, change, school improvement, student achievement and organizational change and do not apply it in planning for change.	☐ Leaders are beginning to explore and apply research/theory based on the relationship between vision, change, school improvement, student achievement and organizational change.	☐ Leaders understand and apply evidence-based effective practice that clearly incorporates the relationship between vision, change, school improvement, student achievement and organizational change.	☐ Leaders are skilled and work collaboratively to apply evidence-based effective practice that incorporates the relationship between vision, change, school improvement, student achievement and organizational change.
☐ Leaders work individually and do not systematically use data to create, implement and evaluate a vision/improvement plan for the school/jurisdiction.	☐ Leaders engage some staff and use limited data in developing, implementing and evaluating a vision/improvement plan for the school/jurisdiction.	☐ Leaders engage all staff and some parents, students and other stakeholders in analyzing data to develop, implement and evaluate achievement of a vision/improvement plan for the school/jurisdiction.	☐ Leaders create multiple opportunities for all staff, students, parents and community stakeholders to participate in planning, implementing and evaluating the vision/improvement plan for the school/jurisdiction.
☐ School improvement plans show a partial focus on instructional practice.	☐ School improvement plans show a strong connection to instructional practice that is applied inconsistently.	☐ School improvement plans are clearly focused on improved instructional practice as core to school improvement and most staff usually applies the strategies identified in the plan and gathers data to analyze and gauge progress toward specific goals.	☐ School improvement plans are focused on the strategies identified as critical to improved instructional practice and staff consistently gathers and analyzes data to gauge progress toward specific goals.
☐ Decisions and resource allocations are rarely aligned with school/jurisdiction improvement goals and priorities.	☐ Decisions and resource allocations are sometimes aligned with the school/jurisdiction vision/improvement goals and priorities.	☐ Decisions and resource allocations are regularly aligned with the school/jurisdiction vision/improvement goals and priorities.	☐ Decisions and resource allocations are consistently aligned with the school/jurisdiction vision/improvement goals and priorities.

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School Culture and Climate

Not Evident	Emerging	Evident	Exemplary
☐ Few school community members believe that all students can learn, improve and succeed.	☐ Some school community members believe that all students can learn, improve and succeed.	☐ Many school community members believe that all students can learn, improve and succeed.	☐ All school community members believe that all students can learn, improve and succeed.
☐ School climate is characterized by low levels of enthusiasm, trust and support and limited efforts have been made to address this situation.	☐ School climate is characterized by varying levels of enthusiasm, where teachers, students and parents sometimes feel inspired or supported and at other times feel unrecognized and defeated/overwhelmed.	☐ School climate is characterized by staff, student and parent enthusiasm, collaboration, trust, respect and shared commitment/responsibility for achievement of improvement goals and student achievement.	☐ School climate is characterized by high and consistent levels of enthusiasm, trust, collaboration, respect and shared commitment and responsibility by staff, students, parents and the community for achievement of improvement goals.
☐ Staff rarely works in teams, takes risks or actively participates in staff discussions related to school improvement. Staff cliques and an "us/them" mentality related to school or jurisdiction administrators are prevalent.	☐ Some staff works in established teams and expresses feelings of isolation periodically characterized by an "us/them" mentality. Risk taking and active engagement in school improvement efforts are sometimes present.	☐ Staff teams meet regularly to develop actions to improve instructional practice and analyze student work. Risk taking and active engagement in school improvement is frequently present.	☐ Staff teams are supported with materials/resources and time to meet regularly to engage in professional development and professional learning communities that are focused on improved instructional practice and student achievement. Risk taking is valued as an important element in school improvement.
☐ Shared commitment to school improvement goals is rarely evident.	☐ Shared commitment to school improvement goals is sometimes evident.	☐ Shared commitment and open dialogue that demonstrates valuing of diverse perspectives to school improvement goals is regularly evident among staff, parents and students.	☐ Shared commitment and open, interactive dialogue related to school improvement goals is evident consistently among staff, parents, students and community partners.
☐ Few students express pride in their school or perceive the staff as personally invested in their success.	☐ Some students take pride in their school and perceive some staff as personally invested in their success.	☐ Many students take pride in their school and believe many staff is personally invested in their success.	☐ Most students take pride in their school. Students recommend actions and work collaboratively to improve school climate and students participate in extracurricular activities as well as student achievement.
☐ Leaders rarely demonstrate understanding of the essential elements of creating positive school/jurisdiction climate.	☐ Leaders understand and sometimes apply effective practices to create and sustain a positive school culture.	☐ Leaders understand and regularly take action to strengthen development of strong and positive school culture that encompasses staff, students, parents, partners and the community.	☐ Leaders understand and consistently use a collaborative approach to building a sense of community and a strong and positive school culture that encompasses staff, students, parents, partners and the community.

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School Culture and Climate

Not Evident	Emerging	Evident	Exemplary
☐ Leader actions are not always consistent with school/jurisdiction values and beliefs related to honouring the diversity present in the school and community.	☐ Leaders act with integrity and sometimes model school vision, values and beliefs that demonstrate valuing of the diversity present in the school/jurisdiction and full commitment to the school and community.	☐ Leaders model and regularly promote use of school vision, values and beliefs by all students, staff, parents and partners and work to address diversity and equity as part of the school improvement plan.	☐ Leaders actively model and consistently use data and teachable moments to promote investment and commitment to the school/jurisdiction vision, values and beliefs and improvement goals. Leaders foster commitment to working collaboratively to celebrate diversity and ensure equity in all programs within the school.
☐ Leaders rarely identify and/or celebrate success/accomplishments and rarely acknowledge, with staff in the school, failed efforts and/or lessons learned.	☐ Leaders sometimes identify and/or celebrate success/accomplishments and sometimes acknowledge, with staff in the school, lessons learned from failed efforts.	☐ Leaders regularly use multiple strategies to recognize and validate successes/accomplishments and progress on school goals and priorities in ways that are meaningful to staff, student, parents, partners and the community. Lessons learned from failed efforts are valued for the opportunities and insight gained from these experiences.	☐ Leaders actively and consistently promote whole school community recognition and celebration of successes/accomplishments and progress toward school goals in ways that are visible and meaningful to members of the school community. Lessons learned from failed efforts are valued and analyzed with transparency for the opportunities and insights they provide.
☐ Leader actions demonstrate a limited understanding of conflict and conflict resolution, and strategies to resolve conflict are limited.	☐ Leader actions demonstrate inconsistent ability to anticipate and diffuse conflict and to successfully resolve conflict within the school.	☐ Leader actions demonstrate consistent skill in anticipating and diffusing conflict and helping others to build their own capacity to engage in constructive problem solving. Conflict resolution processes are written to assist staff, parents and students in successfully resolving conflicts that arise in ways that are respectful of diverse opinions and that validate the importance of these relationships.	☐ Leader actions demonstrate excellent skill in conflict resolution and in working systematically to ensure that expressing opinions contrary to those of administrators or leaders is safe and valued for the richness it brings to the school community. Leaders systematically work with others to implement solutions that increase the strength of relationships and address areas of significant disagreement.
☐ Leaders rarely design collaborative processes and structures to promote a positive and engaging environment within the school/jurisdiction and in interactions that go beyond the school/jurisdiction.	☐ Leaders sometimes design collaborative processes and structures to promote a positive and engaging environment within the school/jurisdiction and in interactions that go beyond the school/jurisdiction.	☐ Leaders frequently design collaborative processes and structures to promote a positive and engaging environment within the school/jurisdiction and in interactions that go beyond the school/jurisdiction.	☐ Leaders consistently engage students, parents and community partners in collaborative processes, structures and interactions that go beyond the school/jurisdiction.

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School Culture and Climate

Not Evident	Emerging	Evident	Exemplary
☐ Leaders rarely use data from surveys and other sources to identify and strengthen positive perceptions of the school as a working and learning environment and that address or resolve negative perceptions.	☐ Leaders sometimes use data from surveys and other sources to identify and strengthen positive perceptions of the school as a working and learning environment and that address or resolve negative perceptions.	☐ Leaders frequently engage students, staff and parents by using data from surveys and other sources to identify and strengthen positive perceptions of the school as a working and learning environment and that address or resolve negative perceptions.	☐ Leaders consistently engage students, staff, parents and community partners by using data from surveys and other sources to identify and strengthen positive perceptions of the school as a working and learning environment and that address or resolve negative perceptions.

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Instructional Leadership

Not Evident	Emerging	Evident	Exemplary
☐ Leaders rarely incorporate knowledge about research on effective instruction, assessment and learning into individual conversations with teachers.	☐ Leaders sometimes use data and their knowledge of evidence-based effective instructional and assessment practices to work with some staff in identifying areas of strength and weakness in student achievement and instructional practices.	☐ Leaders regularly analyze multiple sources of data related to student outcomes/achievement to focus work with staff on the alignment of learning, instruction, assessment and curriculum to maximize student learning.	☐ Leaders consistently use multiple sources of data and work collaboratively with others to create a culture where all staff shares the commitment to and responsibility for improving student achievement and maximizing learning.
☐ Teacher and school/jurisdiction leader professional growth plans do not align with school improvement plans and initiatives focused on student achievement.	☐ Teacher and school/jurisdiction leader professional growth plans are sometimes aligned with school improvement plans to increase student achievement.	☐ Teacher and school/jurisdiction leader professional growth plans are regularly aligned with school improvement plans that are focused on increasing student achievement.	☐ Teacher and school/jurisdiction leader professional growth plans are consistently and strategically aligned and focused on achieving the goals and targets articulated in the school improvement plan.
☐ Teachers are rarely organized into collaborative teams and professional development is rarely targeted on instructional improvement that is specifically focused to improve student achievement. Staff rarely uses data to gauge student achievement outcomes.	☐ Teachers are frequently organized into collaborative teams and professional development is frequently targeted on instructional improvement that is specifically focused to improve student achievement. Staff sometimes uses data to gauge student achievement outcomes.	☐ Teachers and school/jurisdiction leaders are consistently organized into collaborative teams that meet regularly to participate in professional development focused on specific outcomes to improve student achievement. Staff regularly uses data to gauge student achievement outcomes.	☐ Staff, leaders, students, parents and community partners are engaged in collaborative teams organized to plan and implement strategies focused on specific school improvement goals/outcomes related to student achievement. Staff teams consistently rely on multiple data sources to gauge improvement related to student achievement outcomes.
☐ School/jurisdiction leaders visit classrooms only to complete the staff evaluations mandated by the province and/or board.	☐ School/jurisdiction leaders sometimes visit classrooms and sometimes provide input/feedback about instructional strategies.	☐ School/jurisdiction leaders often visit classrooms and usually provide input/feedback on instructional strategies used by teachers.	☐ School/jurisdiction leaders consistently participate in classroom activities, provide input/feedback on instructional strategies used by teachers and provide feedback to students to enhance their learning.
☐ Staff teams rarely use collaborative inquiry or peer observations to analyze and engage in reflection to identify the impact of instructional practice on student learning.	☐ Staff teams sometimes use collaborative inquiry or peer observations to analyze and engage in reflection to identify the impact of instructional practice on student learning.	☐ Staff teams regularly engage in collaborative inquiry or peer observation to analyze and reflect on the impact specific instrumental practices have on student learning.	☐ Leadership and staff teams consistently utilize collaborative inquiry and peer observation to analyze and reflect on the impact specific instructional and administrative practices have on student learning.

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Equity/Supporting Diversity with Vulnerable Populations; e.g., Special Education; Aboriginal Ancestry; Immigrant/Refugee; In Care; Gay/Lesbian; Disadvantaged

Not Evident	Emerging	Evident	Exemplary
☐ Few leaders or teachers understand how cultural, racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic, linguistic and special needs impact learning and personal aspirations, and design and/or modify instruction and assessment to meet the needs of individual students.	☐ Some leaders and teachers understand how cultural, racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic, linguistic and special needs impact learning and personal aspirations, and design and/or modify instruction and assessment to meet the needs of individual students.	☐ Most leaders and teachers understand and engage students and parents in dialogue to further their understanding of how cultural, racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic, linguistic and special needs impact learning and personal aspirations, and they design and/or modify instruction and assessment to meet the needs of individual students.	☐ All leaders and staff understand and engage parents, students and community partners in dialogue and strategic planning that incorporates cultural, racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic, linguistic and special needs components in school improvement targets to support diversity and student achievement in vulnerable populations of students.
☐ Teachers may be individually aware of and demonstrate appreciation for and acceptance of the cultural beliefs and traditions of children and families from ethnic minority groups.	☐ Teachers sometimes demonstrate appreciation for diverse cultures/individual diversity and sometimes incorporate this knowledge into instructional activities to reduce gaps in equity of educational opportunities.	☐ Teachers regularly model appreciation for diversity and minority cultures represented in the student population. They ensure their instructional and assessment practices are designed and/or modified to reduce gaps in educational equity for students and boost student achievement, engagement and success for vulnerable populations.	☐ Teachers work in collaborative teams to consistently incorporate valuing diversity of cultural and other minorities and individual differences into instructional practice. Teachers consistently adapt instructional and assessment practices to reduce gaps in educational equity and boost student engagement, achievement and success for vulnerable populations.
☐ Teachers rarely differentiate instructional materials as individual professionals to meet learner needs.	☐ Teachers sometimes differentiate instructional materials and processes to meet learner needs and sometimes share or reference this practice with colleagues.	☐ Teachers often differentiate instructional materials and processes to meet learner needs and regularly discuss and share these practices with colleagues.	☐ Teachers consistently differentiate instructional materials and processes to meet individual learner needs and always discuss and share these practices with colleagues.
☐ Leaders rarely engage staff, students, parents or community partners in discussions related to closing the achievement gap.	☐ Leaders have engaged some staff, students, parents and community partners in discussions about closing the achievement gap, but have not engaged them in developing systematic actions to achieve specific and measurable results.	☐ Leaders have engaged many staff, students, parents and community partners in action planning, implementation and evaluation of strategies taken to close the achievement gap.	☐ Leaders have engaged most staff, students, parents and community partners and have developed joint accountability for collaborative actions to close the achievement gap, including provision of cultural and other supports needed to increase engagement, trust, support services and success for all students.

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Equity/Supporting Diversity with Vulnerable Populations;
e.g., Special Education; Aboriginal Ancestry; Immigrant/Refugee; In Care; Gay/Lesbian; Disadvantaged

Not Evident	Emerging	Evident	Exemplary
☐ Leaders have not gathered disaggregated data or engaged staff, students, parents and the community in discussions related to equity of educational opportunity for all students and about closing the achievement gap for vulnerable populations within the school or jurisdiction.	☐ Leaders have gathered some disaggregated data to support equity of educational opportunities for all students but have not yet systematically identified gaps in data and put plans in place to remedy this.	☐ Leaders usually work collaboratively within the school community to identify current and future disaggregated data needed to improve equity of educational opportunities for all students and to put measures in place to ensure needed data is available.	☐ Leaders consistently work collaboratively within and beyond school boundaries to compare disaggregated data, focus and align strategies from different perspectives, sectors and sites to improve equity of access to educational opportunities for vulnerable populations. Leaders focus the staff and larger community on addressing diversity and targeting the needs of students, using evidence-based, differentiated and targeted instructional strategies, programs and supports.

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Distributed Leadership

Not Evident	Emerging	Evident	Exemplary
☐ Distributed leadership is rarely evident and no plans are in place to increase shared leadership within the school/jurisdiction.	☐ Distributed leadership is inconsistently evident. Few actions are taken to encourage staff to take initiative and assume leadership of initiatives outside of formal leadership positions.	☐ Distributed leadership is regularly evident. Individuals often make the decision to assume leadership roles, contribute to significant decisions and undertake actions that support improvement goals and student achievement.	☐ Distributed leadership is consistently evident. Individuals who take on informal and formal leadership roles are mentored and coached, as needed, to ensure their success and learning.
☐ School and jurisdiction leaders are formally designated and rarely promote or support broad leadership involvement.	☐ School and jurisdiction leaders promote broader leadership involvement within their staff.	☐ School and jurisdiction leaders regularly promote and support leadership opportunities for members of the school community that include parents and students.	☐ School and jurisdiction leaders actively and consistently support, encourage and create leadership opportunities for all members of the school community and the larger community.
☐ Teachers rarely assume leadership of teams developed to improve instructional practices and increase student achievement.	☐ Teachers sometimes assume leadership of teams developed to improve instructional practices and increase student achievement.	☐ Teachers consistently assume leadership of teams developed to improve instructional practices and increase student achievement.	☐ Teachers consistently engage colleagues and students in teams formed to improve instruction practice and student achievement. Communication between leaders is regular, feedback is specific and supportive, and accomplishments are celebrated for their contribution to the school/jurisdiction.
☐ Significant decisions are made by the administrative team with limited input from staff.	☐ Significant decisions are made by the administrative team with some input from staff and parents.	☐ Significant decisions are made collaboratively with regular input, reflection and consultation with staff, parents, students and key partners. The rationale for decisions is provided to all constituents.	☐ Significant decisions are made following collaborative consultation and consistent input from staff, parents, students and community partners. Frequent two-way communication with all invested parties, including the rationale for the decisions, is consistently provided (subsequent input is incorporated, as appropriate, into implementation of decisions).
☐ Parents and students rarely have leadership roles that contribute to the achievement of school/jurisdiction goals and priorities and are seldom engaged in evaluating progress or achievement of these goals and priorities.	☐ Parents and students sometimes have leadership roles that contribute to the achievement of school/jurisdiction goals and priorities and are sometimes engaged in evaluating progress or achievement of these goals and priorities.	☐ Parents and students take on leadership roles to support achievement of school/jurisdiction goals and are actively engaged in promoting, aligning and evaluating the school/jurisdiction's progress toward achievement of these goals.	☐ Teachers, parents and students are offered many opportunities to contribute as leaders in ways that support improvement goals and evaluation of results achieved.

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Data-driven Decision-making

Not Evident	Emerging	Evident	Exemplary
☐ Leaders and teachers individually review existing data but rarely identify gaps in data or use disaggregated data to determine the effectiveness of instructional practice in improving student achievement.	☐ Leaders sometimes engage staff in reviewing existing data, disaggregated data and identifying and developing mechanisms to gather new data needed to determine the impact of instructional practices on student achievement.	☐ Leaders regularly and systematically engage staff, students, parents and the community in sharing information and analyzing data (quantitative and qualitative), and in determining gaps/strategies to gather needed data as the basis for dialogue related to increasing student achievement.	☐ Leaders consistently and systematically ensure data from multiple sources is available to make decisions or determine actions to improve student achievement by creating multilayered strategies that increase the effectiveness of instructional and assessment practices and enhance partnerships.
☐ Teacher teams rarely review student work to assist them in adapting instructional practices to improve student achievement.	☐ Teacher teams sometimes review student work to assist them in adapting instructional practices to improve student achievement.	☐ Teacher teams consistently review student work to assist them in adapting instructional practices to improve student achievement.	☐ Teacher teams from one school regularly collaborate with teacher teams from other schools to assist them in adapting instructional practices to improve student achievement.
☐ School/jurisdiction leaders and staff rarely monitor attendance, dropout rates and graduation rates.	☐ School/jurisdiction leaders and staff sometimes monitor attendance, dropout rates and graduation rates. Review of this data is internal to the site.	☐ School/jurisdiction leaders and staff work collaboratively with students, parents and partners to regularly monitor attendance, dropout rates and graduation rates, and to implement strategies designed to improve these rates. Effective strategies are shared and adapted, as required, across the jurisdiction and to fit developmental levels and student populations.	☐ School/jurisdiction leaders consistently analyze and adapt strategies, based on evidence of effectiveness, to reduce attendance problems, dropout rates and increase high school completion. All schools in the jurisdiction share responsibility and commitment to work collaboratively with parents, students, the community and other schools to boost student achievement and high school completion.
☐ Data rarely is shared with staff, students, parents and stakeholders to show progress toward improvement goals.	☐ Date sometimes is shared with staff, students, parents and stakeholders to show progress toward improvement goals	☐ Data is reviewed consistently with staff, students, parents and stakeholders to ensure improvement efforts are on target and to adapt strategies, as needed, to meet goals and targets.	☐ Data forms the basis for collaborative planning and evaluation of improvement goals, strategies and targets with staff, students, parents and community partners.

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Allocating Resources

Not Evident	Emerging	Evident	Exemplary
☐ Leaders rarely consider the reallocation of resources to provide the time, staff and funding to implement all aspects of the improvement plan.	☐ Leaders, with some teachers and school council members, consider resources (time, staff, funding) and plans to reallocate resources to implement all aspects of the improvement plan.	☐ Leaders, work collaboratively and consistently with the school community to review, adjust and align resources to increase the impact of desired results identified in the improvement plan.	☐ Leader's decisions and actions regarding resources (time, staff, funding) consistently and actively support collaborative actions to achieve specific results in the improvement plan and clearly reflect the connection between resource allocation and student achievement.
☐ Leaders consider budgeting as the movement of funds between categories of expenditures to support the school improvement plan.	☐ Some creativity in utilizing people and time are incorporated into the budget process.	☐ Resources such as time, funding, staffing and capacity are identified and aligned to school improvement goals and priorities.	☐ Decisions related to allocation of funds, scheduling, staffing and professional development are made to support collective action toward achieving specific results.

Change Management

Not Evident	Emerging	Evident	Exemplary
☐ Staff, parents, students and community members are unaware or marginally aware of the need for change and there is no plan for change.	☐ Staff, parents, students and community members are sometimes involved in discussions related to the need for change and some planning is in process.	☐ Staff, parents, students and community partners are regularly engaged in change processes and in development of cohesive strategies to effect change.	☐ Staff, parents, students and community partners intentionally and consistently put student achievement at the heart of change/improvement efforts.
☐ Collaboration and trust are rarely evident or considered in planning process.	☐ Collaboration and trust are developing as part of the change process.	☐ Collaboration and trust are nurtured and effectively supported as part of the change process.	☐ Collaboration and trust are consistently supported. Relationships between all invested participants in the change/ improvement process are characterized by shared commitment/responsibility and active support to enact the change or improvement goals specified in the planning process.
☐ Staff, students and parents marginally participate in the change process and planning for change is the purview of formal school/jurisdiction leaders.	☐ Staff, students and parents sometimes participate in the change process and planning for change is typically the purview of formal school/jurisdiction leaders. Leaders sometimes incorporate feedback from students, staff and partners in planning change processes.	☐ Staff, students and parents regularly participate in change processes through consultation and their input is consistently used to plan and adapt change improvement plans.	☐ Staff, students, parents and community partners are integral to the change process and their engagement and input is incorporated into all aspects of change processes, including planning, implementation, and evaluation of results achieved.

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Change Management

Not Evident	Emerging	Evident	Exemplary
☐ Professional development and staff meeting time is rarely focused on change processes, directly or indirectly.	☐ Professional development and staff meeting time is sometimes focused on change processes, directly or indirectly.	☐ Professional development and staff meeting time is regularly focused on change processes and student learning, and in strengthening the commitment and active support for implementing these change/improvement processes.	☐ Professional development and staff meeting time is consistently focused explicitly on change processes and student learning and on strengthening the commitment and active support between staff, students, parents and partners for implementing change/improvement processes.

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STAFF DEVELOPMENT RUBRIC

Adapted from Kansas Staff Development Rubric for District/School Assessment (2002)

Professional Learning Communities

Not Evident	Emerging	Evident	Exemplary
☐ Little or no collaboration exists between educators who work independently of one another to improve practice and learner outcomes.	☐ Collaboration between educators to improve practice and learner outcomes exists but is inconsistent and infrequent.	☐ Teams of educators have been formed to work collaboratively on reviewing student work, lesson/unit planning, instructional strategies and learner outcomes.	☐ All educators participate on school-based professional learning communities, meet regularly and frequently to plan instruction, design assessment, review student work samples and solve problems related to improving learner outcomes using data.
☐ Individual staff access to professional development is rarely congruent with school and jurisdiction goals and priorities.	☐ The focus of professional development is inconsistently aligned with school and jurisdiction goals and priorities.	☐ Team planning is scheduled regularly and school and jurisdiction goals and priorities are aligned with the team's work.	☐ All teams are actively engaged in improving student achievement and efforts are fully aligned with school and jurisdiction goals and priorities.

Leadership Learning Communities

Not Evident	Emerging	Evident	Exemplary
☐ Leadership teams are not organized as leadership learning communities and administrators work independently to schedule and encourage staff to engage in professional development designed to improve quality instruction within their jurisdiction or school.	☐ Leaders are beginning to work collaboratively but schedules and incentive systems are created with little connection to school and/or jurisdiction improvement goals and priorities.	☐ Leaders actively support professional development as important in achieving improved learner outcomes, but team planning time is not consistent enough to maximize the effectiveness of school/jurisdiction leadership learning communities.	☐ Leaders actively participate in leadership learning communities to enhance instructional leadership. Team planning time in consistent and structured to maximize the effectiveness of team and leadership learning communities.
☐ Staff development activities are not tied to school and jurisdiction goals and priorities and are typically independent of improvement areas of focus.	☐ Staff development is valued but not aligned with school and/or jurisdiction improvement targets and not specifically focused on improving quality instruction and assessment for learning.	☐ Staff development is scheduled regularly and is focused on improving the quality of instruction.	☐ Staff and leadership development is scheduled to promote sustained engagement in leadership learning communities focused on improving the quality of instruction and on gauging the effectiveness of professional development by monitoring student outcomes.
☐ School and jurisdiction leaders seldom engage in professional development to enhance their ability to fulfill their roles as instructional leaders.	☐ School and jurisdiction leaders inconsistently engage in professional development to enhance their instructional leadership (intermittently and independently of other leaders within their school/jurisdiction).	☐ School and jurisdiction leaders regularly participate in collaborative leadership learning communities to enhance their ability to provide instructional supervision and leadership.	☐ School and jurisdiction leaders expand participation in leadership learning communities to involve lead teachers, parents, students and key partners to increase alignment and collaboration focused on improvement in student learning and high school completion.

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Resources for Professional Development

Not Evident	Emerging	Evident	Exemplary
☐ There is no budget allocation for staff development.	☐ Little of the budget is allocated for staff development.	☐ There are some budget allocations to support professional development for staff.	☐ The school and jurisdiction allocate resources for professional development and release time for teams to meet regularly to work on established improvement goals.
☐ Staff development is scheduled, sporadically and on an individual basis.	☐ Staff development occurs primarily on jurisdiction scheduled professional development days.	☐ Staff development is provided for staff teams to ensure time for collaboration on a regular basis.	☐ All staff participates in teams with regularly scheduled meeting times focused on improving instructional practice and student achievement.
☐ There are few opportunities for staff to access professional development or resource materials to support professional development.	☐ There are limited materials/ resources to facilitate professional development of staff.	☐ Staff has input into selecting materials/resources to support the work of learning communities and enhance the ability to meet improvement goals and targets.	☐ Materials/resources required to support staff in the improvement efforts are readily available.

Data-driven Staff Development

Not Evident	Emerging	Evident	Exemplary
☐ Staff development is planned to meet individual interests of educators and is not driven by student needs.	☐ Staff development is designed to improve student outcomes and a few educators collect and analyze student data to evaluate the impact of their learning on student achievement.	☐ Staff development is designed to improve student outcomes and most educators regularly collect and analyze student data to evaluate the impact of learning on student achievement.	☐ Staff development is developed and approved based on data gathered systematically by educators from classroom-based and provincial assessment data and samples of student work.
☐ Student data is not used as a basis for participating in or evaluating staff development activities.	☐ Few educators collect data for use in determining the impact of their own learning on student outcomes.	☐ Several staff initiatives are developed based on analysis of student performance data.	☐ The design of staff development initiatives is based on student data that is disaggregated to develop professional development priorities.
☐ No formal evaluation of professional development is completed.	☐ The effectiveness of professional development is based on participant satisfaction.	☐ The effectiveness of professional development is based on anecdotal evidence of changed practice and participant satisfaction.	☐ Evidence of improved student learning is the basis for gauging the effectiveness of professional development activities, including that of professional learning communities.

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Research-based Professional Development

Not Evident	Emerging	Evident	Exemplary
☐ Educators are selecting instructional strategies based on personal preference, not on research of effective practices.	☐ Some educators are selecting evidence-based instructional practices to improve learner outcomes.	☐ Most educators are selecting evidence-based instructional practices to improve learner outcomes.	☐ Teams of educators regularly study research to identify and implement improvement strategies.
☐ Staff is not knowledgeable about implementing action research within the classroom, school or jurisdiction.	☐ Staff understands the importance of incorporating evidence-based instructional practice and is becoming aware of action research.	☐ Staff engages in action research to aid decision-making related to programs or practices that should be sustained, adapted or replaced.	☐ Staff is a skilled consumer of educational research and uses action research to determine the effectiveness of improvement strategies.

Evaluation of Professional Development

Not Evident	Emerging	Evident	Exemplary
☐ No indicators are identified or used to ensure professional development is focused on improving student achievement.	☐ Few indicators are used to determine the impact or effectiveness of staff development and whether it is focused on student achievement.	☐ Indicators are identified regularly to guide decision-making related to professional development.	☐ A variety of indicators are used consistently to improve the quality of professional development.
☐ Evidence is not gathered to determine the effectiveness of staff development.	☐ Evidence is collected but not used to validate the effectiveness of professional development.	☐ Some evidence gathered to validate the effectiveness of professional development is sometimes used to support decision-making.	☐ Evidence is gathered to validate the effectiveness of professional development and is used to support decision-making.
☐ No evidence is collected to determine whether professional development results in changes to practice or to assess its impact on student outcomes.	☐ Evaluations of professional development rely solely on immediate qualitative data gathered from participants in workshops or courses.	☐ Evidence of the impact of professional development on student learning is being used by some staff.	☐ Evaluation of staff development is based on data collected that includes not only educator perceptions of usefulness in their practice, but data from implementation of the practice and the impact on attainment of learner outcomes.

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Types of Staff Development

Not Evident	Emerging	Evident	Exemplary
☐ Professional development is provided primarily through workshop formats.	☐ Some well-designed professional development is provided in addition to workshop formats.	☐ Several options for differentiated staff development are provided to support professional learning.	☐ Numerous options for differentiated staff development are provided to support professional learning.
☐ Practice and feedback are not included as part of training. Follow-up support is not offered.	☐ Practice and feedback are included sometimes as part of training. Follow-up support is infrequently offered.	☐ Practice and feedback are included regularly as part of training and are available for selected initiatives or priorities.	☐ Practice and feedback are included consistently as part of training and are available for many initiatives or priorities.
☐ Professional development is presented without inclusion of individual learner needs.	☐ On occasion, choice to accommodate learner preferences is evident.	☐ Staff learning styles, experience and skill levels are incorporated into planning.	☐ Options for differentiated staff development are varied and designed to meet individual and team learning styles and needs, and improvement focus is directly related to student achievement and success.
☐ Knowledge and understanding of change processes are not included in professional development activities.	☐ Knowledge and understanding of change processes are marginally incorporated into professional development activities.	☐ Knowledge and understanding of change processes are regularly incorporated into professional development activities to support improved practice.	☐ Knowledge and understanding of change processes are an integral component of professional development activities and changes to practice and their impact on student achievement are tracked consistently.

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IV. Personalized Learning

SYNOPSIS OF LITERATURE

Personalized learning is an educational approach that incorporates current brain research with educational research. Simply put, it is organizing learning and the school environment around individual student learning needs and abilities in ways that support student interests, talents and skill acquisition.

> *No bird soars too high*
> *if he starts with his own wings.*
> *(William Blake)*

Personalized learning begins with the student, rather than the subject matter. The priority is to know students and their families well enough to create learning opportunities that excite and engage every student in the school to learn.

Personalized learning applies what we know about how people learn to the design of flexible, responsive and authentic instructional processes. This approach creates dynamic learning experiences that help students assess their situations, understand their choices, explore their options, test their skills and express their growing confidence in particular directions that they have set for their own lives. It creates opportunities for students to explore, demonstrate and share their learning. Personalized learning connects students to activities in their communities where learning does make a difference. The focus is on how knowledge is used. This approach prepares students for lifelong learning.

In a personalized learning environment, students can speak with insight and intelligence about what they are learning and how they learn. They work independently, in small groups and as a class. Each student's needs are assessed, talents are developed and interests are spurred. A personalized learning environment is organized to reach as many students as possible for as much of the time as possible.

KEY TENETS OF PERSONALIZED LEARNING

Quality Instruction and Assessment for Learning

- Teachers work individually and collectively to assess and tailor instruction to meet individual student needs and abilities.
- Teachers, paraprofessionals and others working with students know the individual strengths, challenges, interests and talents of the students they are working with and use this knowledge to teach and guide student progress and learning.
- Students are actively engaged in developing and creating knowledge and in determining how to provide evidence of their learning; students have voice, choice and responsibility for their learning and achievement.
- Learning activities are designed to maximize personal relevance, engagement and flexible learning pathways, as well as to provide options for demonstrating learning or outcomes achieved.

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School Organization

- Schools are structured to support the diverse learning aspirations of all students.
- Ongoing, sustained and job-embedded professional development is accessible to staff to improve instructional practice. The establishment of professional learning communities and communities of practice is championed by school and system administration as key to effective teaching and learning.
- Schools are characterized by a culture of inquiry, reflective practice and use of data and technology to effect continuous improvement and improve student outcomes.
- Learning experiences for adults and students are relevant, meaningful and extend beyond the school to the community and world.
- Teams, both school based and system wide, model commitment through strong student–teacher relationships, collegial relationships and a permeating belief that all staff share responsibility for student success and that all students will be successful.

Schools as Networks

- Schools are characterized by partnerships that extend beyond the school to include families and the larger community.
- Parents have an important role, as leaders and members of student learning and support teams, in supporting and facilitating student learning.
- Schools work collaboratively with cross-sectoral services to facilitate access to and integration of services that meet the learning, social, emotional and physical needs of individual students.
- Children and youth at risk or those with special education needs have access to the wraparound supports and services they need to be successful at home, at school and in the community.

CYCLES OF INQUIRY

According to Cushman (1999, p. 2) asking good questions and finding evidence to guide decisions and take action are integral to a school jurisdiction or school culture that functions as a professional learning community. Cycles of inquiry begin with someone posing questions about an area of work in relation to the school or school jurisdiction's mission and vision of teaching and learning and then taking the next step to begin to identify what data or information might help answer the questions.

Key questions (Cushman, 1999, p. 8) might include:

- What do you want to see students do differently? What are the outcomes or results you want to see?
- What might you do differently in your professional/instructional practice (e.g., changes in instruction, assessment, discipline) to try to improve student achievement/learner outcomes?
- What indicators would assist you in seeing if what you are doing differently is helping to create the improved student achievement/learner outcomes you identified?

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Following the gathering of relevant data, the next step involves analyzing it in ways that make comparison, reflection and strategic action possible. Cushman (1999, pp. 1–2) cites one example of an administrator who takes the following steps to track attendance data to identify attendance patterns and factors:

- track student grade levels, ages, genders, ethnicities, achievement and attendance patterns including missed classes
- develop a simple questionnaire to gather information as to why students skipped and/or were removed from their class, along with discussions with several teacher, student and parent representatives
- generate potential solutions to this problem that might involve:
    - supporting and coaching teachers who frequently remove students from their classes
    - identifying pro-social skill development/remedial support/strategies to improve the relationship with teachers/peers and/or increase student engagement
    - identifying new strategies for home–school communication that significantly reduce student absences.

Cultural change occurs when all members of a school community take initiative, gauging the effectiveness of any practice on the evidence they collect about its impact on student learning and achievement. Additionally, sustained change to practices results as new knowledge is constructed and evidence is gathered to substantiate the impact on student learning. When groups of teachers or other staff work collaboratively the impact is multiplied. The richness of this professional dialogue, within and between schools, helps surface the assumptions and interpretations staff make as they review data and supports teachers in implementing their new learning within classrooms, schools and jurisdictions. Teacher collaboration typically focuses on examining student work and may involve participating in peer observations within classrooms. As there can be considerable anxiety with peer observations, development of a protocol for use may help relieve teacher concerns.

To achieve continuous school improvement, inquiry teams consisting of administrators, teachers, other staff, students, parents and key partners, regularly meet to explore and identify effective change strategies for improving the learning of groups of stude ts who, through use of data, have been determined to be at-risk. Once these strategies have been successfully implemented, the team focuses on integrating effective school or system-wide practices so that other students, who may share similar challenges, can benefit. To achieve this goal, inquiry teams need to be incorporated into already existing structures and processes such as grade level or subject-specific meetings. At least one inquiry team needs to focus specifically on students with the lowest performance.

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John Watkins, in his work to coach and analyze school change, described cultures of inquiry as follows (cited in Cushman 1999, pp. 11–12):

- "A culture of inquiry is an 'open system,' continually examining its own purposes as well as the ways it reaches those purposes.
- Cultures of inquiry create multiple, flexible structures as they need them. For example, multi-age groups, multiple forms of assessments, or various ways for school and families to interact, and they continually test those structures against the vision. Inquiry cultures ask what problems the old structures solved, what values they reflected, whose interests they served, what structures would be more consistent with the values and/or beliefs of the school vision, and what people need to know to enact those.
- Cultures of inquiry depend on adults and students collaborating in teams and networks, and they set up critically reflective processes and norms that guide them. These structures—grade level or cross-grade teams, critical friends groups, school–university teams, leadership teams—include professional interactions among teachers, but also involve other people important to the work, inside or outside the school and community.
- Cultures of inquiry have sophisticated structures, settings, processes and norms that support problem setting, problem exploring, problem solving and inquiry.
- Cultures of inquiry create a risk-taking experimental environment that encourages members to develop, reflect on and modify structures and processes.
- Cultures of inquiry are highly strategic and purposeful about seeking and using outside information, resources, expertise and collaborations.
- Leadership in a culture of inquiry is shared, inclusive and a source of and model for asking the hard questions that guide all work."

At its root, inquiry is the conscious process of combining action with reflection, and taking new actions based on those reflections in a continuous cycle. When practiced consistently, inquiry has the benefit of:

- aligning action to key challenges
- creating deeper understanding and learning about how to overcome these challenges
- increasing the use of informed change in practice and policy
- provoking change in relationships between teachers, teachers and students/parents and the school/jurisdiction community
- obtaining improved results for students through identification of clear goals and measures that allow schools and school jurisdictions to measure progress toward achieving these goals/results.

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The inquiry cycle has the following five distinct phases, adapted from a *Guide to data based inquiry, Using the cycle of inquiry to drive learning and change* (n.d. pp. 2–9):

Inquiry Phase: Analyze data to assess the current reality/outcomes

Recommended Process:

- Focus on understanding what the data means related to student achievement, equity, school culture or other areas. In this phase team members:
  - ask questions about the data
  - consider different interpretations of what the data is saying
  - share ideas and record evidence about the data
  - identify further data needs, patterns to celebrate or explore, key challenges, the urgency of the identified challenges and your capacity to address the challenge
- Put what you believe is the priority challenge in writing and cite the data that substantiates this selection.

Inquiry Phase: Identify the factors or practices that impact current results

Recommended Process:

- Take the time to explore why you are getting these results.
  - Digging down to the root causes may require outside expertise and research, in addition to reflection and dialogue between team members.
  - Focus on causes that you can influence and accept responsibility for taking action.
  - Take the priority challenge you identified and use this as the focus of discussion in identifying possible causes.
  - Ask others what they believe are the most important problems that cause this challenge to occur.
  - Engage in activities that deepen your understanding of the challenge, from multiple perspectives, and then refine and clearly articulate the high leverage problem.
  - Consider different sources of levels of the problem; e.g., classroom/instructional; school/structure/policy; community connections.

Inquiry Phase: Identify key actions to get improved results

Recommended Process:

- This phase is devoted to developing a focused strategy or series of strategies to overcome the identified challenge.
  - Discuss the key actions needed to overcome the identified challenge.
  - Extend the dialogue to include the outcomes or effects of actions discussed (*use if ... then*) in order to make the largest or most positive impact.
  - Focus in on one or several (few) key strategies that team members commit to implementing and follow through effectively. These key strategies should cross levels; e.g., classroom instruction; professional development; school; community partnerships.

Inquiry Phase: Specify goals/results to be achieved and what is needed to implement key identified actions

Recommended Process:

- Goals need to be SMART (specific, measureable, attainable, relevant and time bound). Goals identified may be related to student achievement, student equity, teacher practice and organizational improvement. Team members discuss the importance of goal setting for accountability.

Inquiry Phase: Take action

Recommended Process:

- Take each priority goal/strategy and list what needs to be done, and in what order, to successfully achieve the outcomes you have identified.
- Check back by looking at the data needs you identified earlier to decide which ones are necessary to gauge progress or accomplishments. Include actions to overcome any challenges you have identified; e.g., capacity, funding, information, buy-in.
- Team members will have individual, as well as team, action plans so that who does what, when and how is clearly understood. Implement the action plans.

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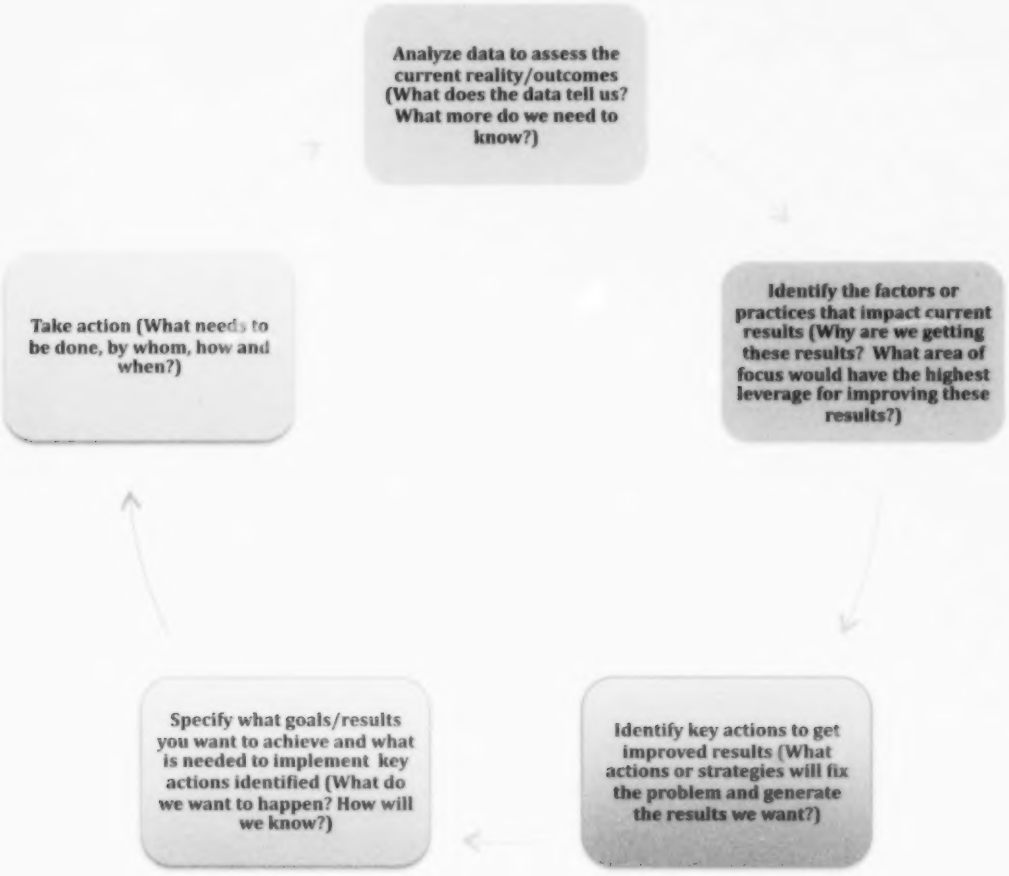
Cycle of Inquiry Process

Analyze data to assess the current reality / outcomes (What does the data tell us? What more do we need to know?)
Identify the factors or practices that impact current results (Why are we getting these results? What area of focus would have the highest leverage for improving these results?)
Identify key actions to get improved results (What actions or strategies will fix the problem and generate the results we want?)
Specify what goals, results you want to achieve and what is needed to implement key actions identified (What do we want to happen? How will we know?)
Take action (What needs to be done, by whom, now and when?)

Cycle of Inquiry Process


Analyze data to assess the current reality/outcomes (What does the data tell us? What more do we need to know?)
Identify the factors or practices that impact current results (Why are we getting these results? What area of focus would have the highest leverage for improving these results?)
Identify key actions to get improved results (What actions or strategies will fix the problem and generate the results we want?)
Specify what goals/results you want to achieve and what is needed to implement key actions identified (What do we want to happen? How will we know?)
Take action (What needs to be done, by whom, how and when?)

Adapted from a *Guide to data based inquiry: Using the cycle of inquiry to drive learning and change* (n.d., pp. 2–9).

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PERSONALIZED LEARNING RUBRIC

Student-centred Instruction

Not Evident	Emerging	Evident	Exemplary
☐ Course content, not individual learner needs, drives instruction, and lessons are designed for the whole class, with little or no accommodation for learner differences.	☐ Individual learner needs, interests and aspirations are sometimes incorporated into instructional processes.	☐ Instruction is often personalized and differentiated to incorporate individual learning styles, interests and aspirations within lessons.	☐ Teachers consistently personalize and differentiate instruction to incorporate individual student learning needs, interests and aspirations.
☐ Teachers make decisions about topics and themes for lessons without student input.	☐ Teachers sometimes make decisions about topics and themes for lessons with some student input.	☐ Teachers make decisions about topics and themes for lessons by regularly negotiating with students. Individual learning plans are available but not fully utilized.	☐ Teachers design and consistently negotiate with students about topics and themes for lessons. Individual students have many opportunities and choices to express their personal attributes, talents, interests and knowledge publically.
☐ Teachers rarely make efforts to incorporate personal relevance or meaning for students.	☐ Teachers sometimes incorporate personal relevance and interests of students into instruction.	☐ Teachers regularly design lessons to enhance personal relevance and interests of students.	☐ Teachers consistently design lessons to enhance personal relevance and interests of students.
☐ Teachers use classroom-based assessments so that all students complete the same assessment based on the teacher's view of what is most important for students to know and be able to do.	☐ Teachers use a mix of teacher-generated assessments and student- or teacher-created assessments to gauge student learning. Assessment provides limited choices for students to demonstrate their learning and methods vary slightly to accommodate individual student learning needs.	☐ Teachers work collaboratively with students and teacher teams to construct assessment criteria based on provincial standards and curriculum and allow for diversity in demonstrations of skill/knowledge attainment. Students self-assess and provide teachers with a measure of their progress.	☐ Teachers work collaboratively with students and other teachers as part of learning teams to construct assessment criteria and methodologies based on provincial standards and curricular outcomes. Teachers work with students to expand the diversity of assessment practices to assess skill/knowledge and student self-assessments, including mutually established criteria incorporated into grades obtained.
☐ Teachers rarely use pre-assessment to differentiate instruction.	☐ Teachers sometimes use pre-assessment to differentiate instruction.	☐ Teachers regularly use pre-assessment to differentiate instruction and personalize learning experiences for students.	☐ Teachers consistently use pre-assessment to differentiate and personalize instruction.
☐ Teachers rarely share rubrics and scoring guides with students prior to the assignment or assessment.	☐ Teachers sometimes share rubric and scoring guides with students prior to the assignment or assessment.	☐ Teachers regularly develop rubrics and scoring guides collaboratively with students and share them with students prior to the assignment or assessment. Students also often engage in self-assessment using the rubric provided.	☐ Teachers consistently develop rubrics and scoring guides collaboratively with students and share them with students prior to assignments or assessments. Students complete self-assessments and then discuss/compare these to the teacher-assessment.

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Student Engagement

Not Evident	Emerging	Evident	Exemplary
☐ Students rarely have opportunity for choice within instructional processes that are teacher-driven and teacher-delivered.	☐ Students have some opportunity for choice within instructional processes. The classroom is predominately teacher-directed yet plans show evidence of inclusion and understanding of student backgrounds.	☐ Students have voice, choice and active engagement within instructional processes. Students have many opportunities to act as partners in learning through activities designed to actively engage them. Classrooms show evidence of facilitation of learning rather than traditional directed learning strategies. Teachers view learners as unique and actively incorporate student interests and aspirations into their instructional processes.	☐ Students voice and choice are integral to the instructional process and teachers and students are co-creators of knowledge, with teachers acting as facilitators of knowledge and skill development. Students actively seek engagement and demonstrate their responsibility for learning based on mutual understanding, with the teacher, of their needs and aspirations.

Student–Teacher Relationships

Not Evident	Emerging	Evident	Exemplary
☐ Student–teacher relationships are not considered a primary focus of improved student achievement and rarely are evident within the school community. Many students, particularly vulnerable students, do not feel that teachers in the school care about them outside of the classroom.	☐ Student–teacher relationships are considered important to improving student achievement and some strategies are in place (teacher advisors, small communities within schools) to help strengthen the connection between teachers and students. Plans to strengthen the connection and relationships with vulnerable students are in process.	☐ Student–teacher relationships are characterized by trust, caring and demonstrated commitment to support all students to be successful at school. The school/jurisdiction has strategies/incentives in place to support and strengthen student-teacher relationships. Vulnerable students are supported in establishing strong connections to teachers and other staff who work to understand their life experiences, background and learning needs and to accommodate them within the classroom and school.	☐ All teachers identify and work to develop strong, positive and caring relationships with all students as critical to the instructional process. Staff actions demonstrate shared commitment and responsibility for the success of all students, irrespective of whether or not they teach these students. Teachers actively seek to understand the student, his or her life experiences, cultural background, talents, and strengths, in order to better meet learning and developmental needs.
☐ Behavioural expectations and disciplinary measures are reactive and uniformly applied to students.	☐ Behavioural expectations are articulated and, when possible, student engagement related to expectations and consequences is part of the process.	☐ Behavioural expectations are clearly communicated and designed to assist students in building capacity to successfully follow codes of conduct.	☐ Behavioural expectations are clearly communicated and understood by students and parents. Whenever possible, student, family and community engagement in setting behavioural expectations for students and consequences for

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Student-Teacher Relationships

Not Evident	Emerging	Evident	Exemplary
	process.	Whenever possible, student and family engagement in setting behavioural expectations for students and consequences for infractions to behavioural codes is developed collaboratively.	infractions to behavioural codes is developed through collaborative processes. The emphasis is on supporting students to alter inappropriate behaviours while being supported in developing constructive replacement behaviours; e.g., restorative justice approach.
☐ Teachers rarely anticipate or modify the environment to reduce behavioural infractions.	☐ Teachers sometimes anticipate and modify the environment to reduce behavioural infractions. Consequences to school behavioural infractions are inconsistently tailored to the individual student.	☐ Teachers regularly anticipate and modify the school and classroom environment to reduce behavioural infractions. Consequences are regularly individualized for each student.	☐ Teachers consistently anticipate and modify the school and classroom environment to reduce behavioural infractions. Consequences are consistently individualized for each student.

Family Engagement

Not Evident	Emerging	Evident	Exemplary
☐ Relationships between families and teachers/school leaders are superficial and characterized by limited contact. Communication and support fluctuates.	☐ Relationships between families and teachers/school leaders reflect understanding of the family circumstances. There are some efforts to engage them as valued members of the school community.	☐ Relationships between families and teachers/school leaders reflect understanding and appreciation for parent and student engagement in the school, and for the values and importance they play in each student's life. Communication between the school and home is interactive, open and focused on supporting the family's ability to effectively support the child's learning.	☐ Relationships between families and teachers/school leaders reflect mutual respect, high regard and active engagement in development, implementation and evaluation of individual student plans designed to increase student success and achievement.

Diversity

Not Evident	Emerging	Evident	Exemplary
☐ Classroom instruction and assessment are rarely varied to accommodate student backgrounds and interests. Lessons are designed for the whole class and few accommodations are made for individual learner differences.	☐ Classroom instruction and assessment are sometimes varied to accommodate student needs, backgrounds and interests.	☐ Classroom instruction and assessment are co-created with students and provide rich and varied strategies/approaches that accommodate learning styles, needs, interests and backgrounds of students.	☐ Classroom instruction and assessment consistently accommodate learning styles, needs, interests and backgrounds of students. Students and teachers see themselves as important partners in the learning process. Students are knowledgeable about their own learning needs and preferences and are actively engaged with their teacher(s) in designing instructional experiences and determining how to demonstrate their learning.

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School Organization

Not Evident	Emerging	Evident	Exemplary
☐ School operations do not consider the learning aspirations or interests of students, families and communities and are not designed to support adults who serve students. Examples include: • scheduling • preparation time • discipline policies • contact time for students/families • time for teacher collaboration • professional development • parenting supports • mentoring/coaching for students and staff • service-learning opportunities	☐ School operations sometimes are adapted or designed to support the diverse learning aspirations and interests of students, families and communities. Examples include: • scheduling • preparation time • discipline policies • contact time for students/families • time for teacher collaboration • professional development • parenting supports • mentoring/coaching for students and staff • service-learning opportunities.	☐ School operations and structures are regularly developed or adapted through collaboration with students, staff, parents and partners to maximize support and incorporate their interests and aspirations into the climate and culture of the school/jurisdiction. Examples include: • scheduling • preparation time • discipline policies • contact time for students/families • time for teacher collaboration • professional development • parenting supports • mentoring/coaching for students and staff • service-learning opportunities.	☐ School operations are consistently connected to family and community aspirations to maximize student achievement and success through sustained collaboration that focuses on school operations from the student's learning perspective and focuses on increasing student achievement, engagement, connection and interests. Examples include: • scheduling • preparation time • discipline policies • contact time for students/families • time for teacher collaboration • professional development • parenting supports • mentoring/coaching for students and staff • service-learning opportunities.

Networks Beyond the School

Not Evident	Emerging	Evident	Exemplary
☐ Schools operate as islands within the community and few partnerships are developed or sought.	☐ Schools recognize the importance of partnerships in supporting student learning and are beginning to make plans to extend current and create new partnerships.	☐ Schools operate as an important extension of the community and partnerships are nurtured and sought to extend learning opportunities and supports for students and families.	☐ Schools nurture multiple partnerships and establish joint accountabilities that are mutually beneficial for students, families and the community. All partnerships are focused on increasing student achievement, success and connection to the community.
☐ Cross-disciplinary supports developed through partnership are limited or non-existent.	☐ Cross-disciplinary supports are sometimes provided through partnerships but support is accessed inconsistently partner relationships are tentative. Services are partially integrated.	☐ Cross-disciplinary supports and services, including wraparound services, are well-established. Access is well-established and effective in meeting the needs of students.	☐ Cross-disciplinary supports and services are created and adapted in response to individual learner needs. Partners have well-established relationships and consistently demonstrate their willingness to adapt to unique student or family circumstances so that all students are able to access these needed services.

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Cycles of Inquiry to Improve Student Outcomes

Not Evident	Emerging	Evident	Exemplary
☐ Leaders and teachers rarely pose questions about the impact of instructional practice on student learning, based on data that might provide insight or answers to the questions posed.	☐ Leaders and teachers sometimes pose questions about the impact of instructional practice on student learning, based on relevant data that provides insight or reflection related to the questions posed.	☐ Leaders and teachers regularly pose questions about the impact of instructional practice on student learning, based on analysis of data that provides insight, reflection and changes to practice and that answers the questions posed.	☐ Leaders and teachers, as part of collaborative teams, consistently formulate questions to compare, reflect and analyze data related to student learning and achievement in order to improve instructional practice and student achievement.
☐ Leaders and teachers have limited skill in identifying questions to be asked or in investigating or disaggregating data to deepen understanding of assumptions and practices and their impact on student achievement and success.	☐ Leaders and teachers are somewhat skilled in identifying questions to be asked or in gathering/analyzing/ disaggregating data to deepen understanding of assumptions and practices and their impact on student achievement and success.	☐ Leaders and teachers demonstrate skill in identifying questions to be asked and investigating/disaggregating data to deepen understanding of assumptions and practices and their impact on student achievement and success.	☐ Leaders and teachers are highly skilled in identifying questions to be asked or investigating/disaggregating data to deepen understanding of assumptions and practices and their impact on student achievement and success.
☐ Teachers work in isolation and do not usually meet as teams to share insights, analyze data or review relevant research related to the questions posed.	☐ Leaders and teachers sometimes work in teams to share insights, analyze data and review relevant research to improve instructional practice in response to questions posed.	☐ Leaders and teachers regularly work in teams to identify assumptions, share insights, analyze data and review relevant research to improve instructional practice in response to questions posed. Critical inquiry is evident in several forms including: • study groups • parent-teacher-student task forces • critical friends groups.	☐ Leaders and teachers consistently form learning teams that work collaboratively with students, parents and partners to identify assumptions, share insights, analyze data and review relevant research to improve student achievement and success in response to questions posed. Collaborative inquiry is evident in many forms including: • study groups • parent-teacher-student task forces • critical friends groups.

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V. Successful Transitions

SYNOPSIS OF LITERATURE

Educators and researchers agree that planning for successful transitions is critical prior to, during and subsequent to these transition points. Although there are many transition points for students, perhaps most significant are the transitions from early childhood programs, such as Kindergarten into Grade 1, then the transitions that move from division to division—primary to upper elementary, elementary to junior and middle school, middle school to high school—and finally the transitions from high school to post-secondary or the world-of-work.

Developing strategies to identify the risk factors individual students face is the first step in transition planning.

When children are entering the educational system for early childhood services programming, it is critically important to involve parents as partners in the educational process. Preschool screening with standardized and statistically valid instruments can aid early identification of learning and developmental assets and needs. As the first step in this process, parents can complete the Ages and Stages Checklist through health service authorities, schools and/or Parent Link Centres. Asking parents to provide background information about their child establishes them as a valued partner in their child's learning.

If the child has special education needs, an important element in cross-sectoral planning is to include service practitioners from other disciplines. This will support the family in addressing the unique learning and developmental needs of individual children. Regularly scheduled service team meetings, which include parents as active participants, set the foundation for developing the trusting collaborative relationships that are essential to supporting students with special or complex needs.

Transition planning for entry into Grade 1 should start several months prior to the end of the Kindergarten year. Teachers, educational assistants, parents and support team members work collaboratively to identify the differences in task demands between Kindergarten and Grade 1, and ensure that the receiving teacher knows the child and his or her developmental and learning needs prior to the beginning of the school year. Visitation to the receiving class, home visitation, and opportunities for the child and parent to get to know the teacher on an informal basis prior to, during and subsequent to the actual transition can help develop a partnering relationship between home and school. Other service providers remain important members of the student support team.

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Use of technology such as videoconferencing can be useful in program planning to support the needs of students. Collaborative agreement about the type and frequency of data collected and sharing of classroom-based assessment strategies supports team members in understanding the learning environment and what supports, services and/or programming will be most useful for individual students with identified needs. A similar approach is recommended for other transition points within school for students with special education needs.

Effective transitions include the following elements (Dockett & Perry 2001, pp. 6–14):

- focus on establishing positive relationships between students, parents, service providers and educators (p. 6)
    - although the outcomes of successful transitioning relate to developing students' skills and knowledge, it is critical that participants in the transition process establish trust and value one another as important and contributing members of the student's learning team and school community (p. 6); this is particularly important as students enter into Kindergarten and Grade 1
    - students' and parents' perceptions of being valued and important contributors in the learning process may enhance or detract from their willingness to be engaged in the school community (p. 7)
- belief that the student will be successful at learning and the purpose of transitioning is to facilitate this success and seek ways to collaborate in this process (p. 7)
- understanding that transitions are a process that takes place over time and that students must be supported before, during and after the actual transition occurs (p. 8)
- resources to enable access to the people, time and materials needed to plan and implement successful transitions (p. 9)
- involvement of other service providers, as needed, and the students for whom the transition is being planned, to ensure their perspectives and needs are incorporated; this is important as transitions can impact all those actively involved with the student (p. 10)
- planning and evaluation to ensure that lessons learned are incorporated as part of continuous improvement (p. 10)
- flexibility and responsiveness to changing needs/interests of participants (p. 11)
- ongoing two-way communication that recognizes that students, parents, educators and others have important information and knowledge that can contribute to the successful transition of the student (p. 13)
- recognition that the family, community and cultural context in which the student lives significantly influence the transition planning and implementation process (p. 14).

In the case of a study by Johns Hopkins University (McPartland et al 1998, pp. 340–341), a separate transitional program was established for Grade 9 students. Teacher teams had committed time for collaborative planning to support individual students considered at risk. The responsibility for finding solutions to student attendance issues, discipline problems and learning difficulties rested with this teacher team and their team leader, who used monthly goal sheets and weekly data to set and monitor trends in student behaviour. In the latter case, data from school surveys related to school climate and completed by faculty and students showed dramatic improvement in perceptions of the school.

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Dropout prevention research also includes several citations of partnerships between high schools and post-secondary schools in which students could earn dual credits for course completions. These kinds of partnerships can be instrumental in supporting at-risk students to develop occupational goals, to see the relevance between the school curriculum and their career aspirations, and to assist them in developing self-efficacy related to their ability to achieve their goals and aspirations.

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SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS RUBRIC

Relationships

Not Evident	Emerging	
☐ Relationships between school staff, parents, students and other involved service providers are strained or characterized by lack of trust and limited collaboration throughout the transition process.	☐ Relationships between school staff, parents, students and other services providers indicate a willingness to enter into relationships and some distrust may be evident during the transition process.	☐
☐ Members of the transition team do not have clearly established roles.	☐ Members of the transition team have clearly established roles but inconsistently participate in transition planning and implementation.	☐

Resources

Not Evident	Emerging	
☐ Resources to support successful transitions are non-existent.	☐ Resources to support transitions are provided in limited ways, predominately focused on preparing for the actual transitions.	☐

Communication

Not Evident	Emerging	
☐ Communication is one-way, limited and provides marginal support to the transition team, parents and students.	☐ Communication is open and frequent but limited to tasks related to planning for the transition.	☐

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Evident		Exemplary
Relationships between school staff, parents, students and other involved service providers are well-established and characterized by trust and commitment to ensuring successful transitions.	☐	Relationships between school staff, parents, students and other involved service providers are well-established, collaborative and characterized by trust and open communication, as demonstrated by team commitment to ensuring success throughout the transition process.
Members of the transition team have clearly established roles and most members regularly anticipate emergent issues and seek solutions through team problem-solving processes.	☐	Members of the transition team have well-established transition processes, and consistently work collaboratively to anticipate and resolve emergent issues throughout transition planning, implementation and evaluation.

Evident		Exemplary
Resources to support transitions are regularly provided and include provisions for the initial transition and supports needed subsequent to the actual transition.	☐	Resources to support transitions are consistently budgeted for and include support for the family and student making the transition, as well as support for professional development, as needed, to ensure professionals have the knowledge and skills to effectively meet the student's individual needs. Time for joint planning with all transition team members is provided prior to, during and subsequent to the actual transition, as required to effectively support the student and family.

Evident		Exemplary
Communication is two-way, frequent, focused and designed to encourage parents, educators and students to identify any possible issues or barriers, and to work collaboratively to address them prior to the transition.	☐	Communication is two-way, frequent, focused and solution-oriented throughout the planning, implementation, follow-up and evaluation stages of transition. Team members share joint accountability for outcomes and processes. Subsequent to the transition, adjustments are made that build on team learnings to more effectively support students in making successfully transitions.

Culture/Context

Not Evident	Emerging	
☐ The culture and family context is not considered during transition planning or implementation. Examples include: • cultural traditions, values, beliefs • language proficiency of parents/student • important adults in the student's life; e.g., elders • caseworkers, if applicable • other adults, including mentors, who are important to the student.	☐ The cultural and family context is sometimes considered as part of transition planning. Examples include: • cultural traditions, values, beliefs • language proficiency of parents/student • important adults in the student's life; e.g., elders • caseworkers, if applicable • other adults, including mentors, who are important to the student.	☐

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Evident	Exemplary
The culture and family context is regularly considered during transition planning and implementation. Ensuring the family is an integral part of transition planning is a key feature of all transition planning and parents play an important role. Examples include: • cultural traditions, values, beliefs • language proficiency of parents/student • important adults in the student's life; e.g., elders • caseworkers, if applicable • other adults, including mentors, who are important to the student.	☐ The culture, structure, history and context of families is a core element in transition planning and implementation. Transition team members consistently share commitment to honouring the family and cultural context during student transition planning, implementation and evaluation. Transition plans are unique to the student and family. Examples include: • cultural traditions, values, beliefs • language proficiency of parents/student • important adults in the student's life; e.g., elders • caseworkers, if applicable • other adults, including mentors, who are important to the student.

VI. Collaborative Partnerships

SYNOPSIS OF LITERATURE

> *Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.*
> *(Henry Ford)*

Partnerships are a critical component of successful dropout prevention projects. Many of the factors that impact children and youth are present in the community-at-large and have an impact on school performance and engagement. Parents, communities and the business sector all have a vested interest in taking action to increase high school completion rates. Schools alone cannot eliminate the factors that impact early school leaving.

Research indicates that students who drop out have a greater potential to be involved in the justice system, have poorer health outcomes, struggle with finding and maintaining employment and, as adults, may be dependent on social service and welfare systems.

Students at risk for early school leaving may need additional support, for issues such as addictions and mental health, from a number of partners, including Alberta child and family services authorities and health services. They also may need support from local businesses that provide job shadowing or mentoring to help them believe in their ability to reach occupational goals.

Successful partnerships require time to establish relationships based on trust and mutual accountabilities. They also require training to ensure common expectations, commitment to common goals and integration of services for students at-risk of early school leaving.

Goals of partnerships, although focused on students, also should provide family support. A number of risk factors students experience are related to family stress and dysfunction. New approaches to school–community partnerships include assessing and aligning services to promote equity between partners and using the lens of youth engagement and healthy development to assess current and anticipated actions. In *Developing effective partnerships to support local education* (School Communities that Work: A National Task Force on the Future of Urban Districts 2002, pp. 4–8) the following principles for effective partnerships are identified.

- Creation of champions or leaders who have the authority to legitimize the role of the partnership and who are committed to shared goals and outcomes (p. 4).
- Commitment to achieving specific, compelling common outcomes for children and youth (p. 4).
- Belief in building civic capacity through mobilizing others to act to address a specific concern and through development of a common definition of the specific concern and strategic action plan to solve it (p. 4).
- Shared and distributed accountabilities that focus on joint assessment of the effectiveness of current services and activities, and that identify what must be improved along with the steps to take to obtain desired results (p. 5).

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- Effective use of data on programs and outcomes for children and youth, and programs to mobilize support, evaluate effectiveness, understand trends, map service availability and create cross-sector accountabilities. Frank discussions about access, security and ownership of data are essential in helping to eliminate barriers to information sharing and to protect individual rights to privacy (p. 6).
- Candid discussions about partner interests, limitations and expectations are needed to build trust and ensure expectations are realistic (p. 6).
- Members ensure that youth perspectives and youth voice are integral to the partnership, through direct participation in leadership, key decision-making and implementation of action plans. Youth also can participate through surveys, focus groups or other information-gathering strategies. (p. 6)
- Parent engagement is central to partnerships to ensure parents are involved as allies, advocates and leaders (p. 6).
- Partners work together to generate needed funding and to eliminate competition for funding between partners. If hiring staff, joint funding often is useful in ensuring accountability to partnering agencies or organizations (p. 7).
- Members proactively look for opportunities to extend the partnership and expand the sphere of influence of the partnership (p. 7).
- Partners build infrastructure supports so that the partnership builds capacity to continue as key members leave (p. 7).
- Members are realistic about progress, anticipated and achieved, and celebrate "small wins" in ways that are meaningful to partners and the community (p. 8).

SERVICE LEARNING

Service learning is a school–community collaboration that has been identified in the literature as an evidence-based approach to increasing high school completion that is effective with students from elementary through to high school. *Growing to greatness*, a report from the National Youth Leadership Council (2008, p. 5), identifies service learning as a critical building block for the success of children and youth, in school and in their adult lives.

Research on early school leavers indicates that they become increasingly disengaged from their schools during elementary grades and that this alienation and disengagement continues to grow throughout junior and senior high school. Service learning opportunities that connect the school to the community and that include a mentoring component make a significant positive impact on these vulnerable children and youth.

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In *Growing to greatness* the following standards and indicators for quality service-learning practice (adapted from National Youth Leadership Council 2008, pp. 10–11) are identified.

Sustainability

Outcome	Indicators
The service-learning activity has sufficient length and frequency of service to address community needs and meet specified outcomes.	• Service-learning projects are based on identified community needs and include planning, knowledge acquisition activities, action, reflection, application of lessons learned and celebration. • Service-learning projects are scheduled across a specified period of time. • Service-learning projects are planned to allow sufficient time to address a specific identified community need and to achieve specified learner outcomes.

Link to Curriculum

Outcome	Indicators
The service-learning activity includes instructional strategies that are linked to curriculum and meet specific learner outcomes.	• Service-learning projects have clearly articulated goals. • Service-learning projects are aligned with curricular outcomes. • Service-learning, sponsored by the school, is recognized formally by the school and school jurisdiction as a valuable learning activity.

Partnerships

Outcome	Indicators
Service-learning project partnerships are collaborative, mutually beneficial and designed to address identified community needs.	• Service-learning projects involve partners such as youth, educators, families, community organizations and businesses. • Service-learning partnerships are designed to ensure frequent communication so that all members are well-informed and engaged in ensuring the success of the project. • Service-learning partners develop common goals and joint accountability for the success of projects in which they are engaged. • Service-learning partners share information and work collaboratively to resolve issues that arise, and promote their partnership as a valued resource within the community.

Relevant Services

Outcome	Indicators
Service-learning projects actively engage participants in work that is meaningful and relevant to all involved.	• Service-learning projects are developmentally appropriate to participants. • Service-learning projects address real-world issues that are personally relevant to the participants. • Service-learning projects are interesting, engaging and useful to the community. • Service-learning projects assist participants in understanding their work in relation to the underlying societal or community issue being addressed. • Service-learning projects lead to attainable and tangible outcomes that are valued by those being served.

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Youth Voice and Perspective

Outcome	Indicators
Service-learning projects provide youth with a strong voice in planning, implementing and evaluating service-learning experiences, with support and guidance from adults involved.	• Service-learning projects actively engage youth in generating ideas during all phases of the project, from planning through to implementation and evaluation. • Youth participate as part of the decision-making processes throughout the project. • The culture created as part of the service-learning projects is open, trusting and supportive of participating youth and adults. • Knowledge acquisition and transfer and youth leadership are key components of the service-learning project. • Youth involved in service-learning projects participate in project evaluation including assessment of the quality of their learning experience.

Appreciation of Diversity

Outcome	Indicators
Service-learning projects promote understanding and valuing of diversity and respect between participants.	• Service-learning projects help participants identify and analyze differing perspectives to enhance their understanding of these points of view. • Service-learning projects help participants to increase their prosocial skills, particularly those related to problem-solving and group decision-making. • Service-learning projects help participants to understand and value diversity of perspectives and backgrounds or cultures for those offering or receiving services. • Service-learning projects reduce or eliminate stereotypes.

Reflection

Outcome	Indicators
Service-learning projects incorporate varied and frequent activities for reflection that prompt insight and analysis about oneself, the community and society.	• Service-learning projects are designed to incorporate reflection in many forms (written, verbal, artistic and nonverbal) to demonstrate learning and to probe changes to participant's knowledge, skills and/or attitudes. • Reflective activities occur prior to, during and subsequent to the service-learning project. • Service-learning reflective activities encourage participants to think deeply about societal/community/school problems and potential solutions for these problems. • Service-learning projects provide an opportunity for participants to explore their preconceptions and assumptions in the context of what it means to be a caring and contributing citizen. • Service-learning projects include opportunities to examine real civic issues related to their service-learning project and to connect these to participant experiences.

Tracking Progress

Outcome	Indicators
Service-learning projects engage participants in ongoing tracking to gauge accomplishments/progress toward meeting identified outcomes and to use these results as part of the continuous improvement and sustainability process.	• Service-learning projects are designed to collect data or evidence of progress toward meeting specific learning and project outcomes from varied sources and throughout the life of the project. • Participants use data as evidence to improve project and learner outcomes. • Service-learning project participants communicate progress toward specified outcomes with the broader school, school jurisdiction and community, including policy makers, to deepen understanding of service-learning and the practices that underlie successful results.

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WRAPAROUND APPROACH TO SERVICE DELIVERY

Wraparound is an approach that provides services to help families whose children have complex or challenging needs to function more successfully in school, at home and in the community. Specifically, wraparound is a planning process that results in creating unique integrated cross-disciplinary or sector case/program plans to take advantage of natural supports and provide services that meet the needs of and result in positive outcomes for the child, youth and families. Research and evaluations of wraparound services indicate these services are particularly promising in working with children and youth with severe emotional/behavioural disabilities (Burns and Goldman 1999, p. 11).

For services to be congruent with the wraparound process, the following elements of practice must be present.

Elements and Principles (adapted from Burchard et al 2002 p. 2; Scott & Eber 2003, p. 135)

- Services are **community-based**.
- Wraparound is a **team-driven process** that begins with the child/youth, is **family-centred** utilizing natural supports, accesses community services, and works to integrate these services within planning, implementation and evaluation of the individualized plan.
- Families are **full and active partners** throughout the process.
- Services and supports are **individualized**, designed around strengths, and meet the needs of children, youth and families **across life domains** to promote safety, success and stability.
- The process is **culturally appropriate** and builds on the unique values, traditions and strengths of the family and child/youth.
- Wraparound teams have **unconditional commitment** to serve the child, youth and family.
- Plans are developed through **collaboration** and incorporate **flexible approaches** and strategies for successfully resolving emergent issues.
- Outcomes are **identified and measured** for the child/youth, family, and/or agencies/organizations providing service.
- Services include a **balance of formal and informal** supports.

Wraparound services have been well-received by families because the process ensures they have both voice and choice as partners on the team. A secondary benefit identified in the research relates to the trust and relationships formed between the service providers and families who work together and share responsibility for improving outcomes for the children/youth they are committed to supporting. Service providers also report benefits from participation as the cross-disciplinary approach builds their knowledge and skill repertoires and assists them in increasing their professional networks and ability to access community supports for those they serve.

Challenges to successful implementation of wraparound processes include organizational barriers, legal constraints, funding and/or administrative processes that act as obstacles to accessing collaboratively designed services. For these reasons, the involvement of school jurisdiction leaders in developing a collaborative community-based structure, vision and process to enable and promote development and execution of the wraparound approach is key to effective implementation.

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Service-learning projects engage participants in ongoing tracking to gauge accomplishments/progress toward meeting identified outcomes and to use these results as part of the continuous improvement and sustainability process.	• Service-learning projects are designed to collect data or evidence of progress toward meeting specific learning and project outcomes from various sources and throughout the life of the project. • Participants use data as evidence to improve project and learning outcomes. • Service-learning project participants communicate progress toward specified outcomes with the broader school, school jurisdiction and community, including policy makers, to deepen understanding of service-learning and the practices that underlie successful results.

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Once this has been developed, a lead organization is identified to manage the implementation of these wraparound services including criteria to access referral processes and joint professional development to assist teams in working collaboratively and establishing joint accountability for specified service plan outcomes.

The literature on effective wraparound practices also indicates the need to dedicate staff time for coordination/facilitation of the process. Team members need to have the capacity to assess needs and strengths, recruit membership based on the strengths and needs of the child/youth and family, and partner to develop a single integrated plan that includes provision for safety/crisis and that has measureable outcomes. Without organizational partnership and support, school staff and other service providers are faced with creating ad hoc teams to support children and youth with complex or challenging needs without the supports and structure needed to succeed on a consistent basis.

There are four stages to the wraparound process.

- In the initial stage, the lead facilitator meets with the family and key team members to gather information, perspectives and existing data related to strengths and needs.
- In the second stage, developing the plan is the key task. Team members meet to review the strengths and needs data across multiple life domains (such as social, emotional, academic, communicative, physical and spiritual) and contexts; e.g., home, school, community. The team narrows the focus of planning and develops strategies for implementation ensuring concerns of the family have priority and then determines how to access resources available to meet these needs such as functional behaviour supports.
- In the third stage, the team documents accomplishments, assesses the efficacy of different interventions and engages in interactive problem solving to address issues that arise.
- In the final stage, the team engages in transition planning by ensuring that team members work collaboratively within their sectors/disciplines to address potential problems, establish new relationships between the child/youth and family and future service providers, facilitate access to future services and celebrate accomplishments.

The most widely used method of measuring the efficacy of the wraparound process and outcomes may be the Wraparound Fidelity Assessment System (WFAS) , a multi-method approach to assessing the quality of individualized care planning and management for children and youth with complex needs and the fidelity of wraparound processes. This tool may be found at http://depts.washington.edu/wrapeval/WFI.html.

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INCREASING SCHOOL SUCCESS FOR CHILDREN/YOUTH IN CARE

Alberta Education sponsored, in partnership with Alberta Children and Youth Services, a series of informal consultations with youth in care, foster parents, educators, staff from the Child and Youth Advocate Office, and other services providers to hear their perspectives on what factors enhanced or detracted from school success for this population. Children and youth in care stated they needed good teachers who cared about them, were welcoming and who motivated them to be engaged in their learning. They talked about feeling stigmatized or labelled and their desire to be "normal" and to fit in with their peers. Some talked about the negative impact of placement moves, particularly mid-year moves, and the fact these moves often resulted in missing school and having to change schools. Some indicated they had been bullied and expressed their desire for the chance to engage in extracurricular activities and receive the support/opportunities they need to be successful in school and with peers.

Caregivers spoke of the unique needs of children and youth in care, in dealing with past trauma and loss, and in the case of those with special needs, dealing with disabilities that impact their ability to be successful at school and in the community. A number of foster parents indicated their perception that some schools are reluctant to receive children in care who may require additional support or who may pose behavioural challenges within the school. Their belief is that schools need to find alternatives to suspensions and expulsions or sending children home for disciplinary infractions. In addition, caregivers specifically cited opportunities to receive tutoring, engage in applied learning activities, validate and celebrate their successes, and receive needed learning support services as necessary ingredients for school success.

Caseworkers indicated that many children and youth in care have learning difficulties/ disabilities that are compounded by the emotional trauma and losses they have incurred. Often these children and youth give up easily and lack belief in their ability to create positive outcomes because their life experiences have shown them how little they do control. They identified the critical importance of early identification and intervention and the need for tutoring supports, mentoring services and specialized services within school to support social/emotional development as well as acquisition of literacy/academic skills.

The Child and Youth Advocate's Office:

- indicated that the children and youth they serve want to be treated like everyone else, but still need additional support and care, thereby creating a delicate balance for educators and other service providers
- identified the fact that placement moves are difficult and that this is even more pronounced when the moves include changing schools
- stated that payment of school fees can cause embarrassment for children when they have to wait a significant time for social workers to pay these fees; this administrative issue sometimes limits their ability to participate in extracurricular activities
- indicated that placing these youth on correspondence courses where they need to work independently does not work; increased flexibility and an identified key contact or advocate within the school to build connection, relationship and offer support to these children and youth would be an effective way of meeting their needs and helping them to successfully deal with emergent issues and challenges and to celebrate their journey
- stated that caseworkers need to be more connected to the schools and actively promote the importance of education to each student's future.

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Educators said that the reason children and youth in care do not complete high school is related to internal factors unique to the child (e.g., disabilities, abilities, temperament), school-related factors (e.g., relationships with teachers, attendance, completion of homework) and community/home factors (e.g., number of placement/school changes experienced). They identified the need to have accurate information about the student's previous program, school, grade, courses, special needs, learning supports and achievement in order to ensure the placement and program for the child or youth is appropriate for his or her educational needs. Educators also identified the importance of connection to the caseworker, as well as the foster parents, so that collaboratively they can resolve problems or deal with issues that arise.

Also noted in these consultations was the important role that school-based administrators play in setting the tone and climate to ensure children and youth in care are welcomed into the school community as valued and contributing members. *The national project on resilience in youth, Alberta roundtable discussions* (Alberta Education August 2008, p. 13) provided advice to principals to help students in care succeed in school. Examples of this advice included:

- making them feel important by taking an interest in them; e.g., knowing their names and life circumstances
- ensuring they are not prejudged by staff
- not allowing past behaviour or transgressions to follow them
- forming relationships and having personal investment in their success
- providing meaningful acknowledgement of accomplishments and efforts made
- assigning mentors to help support and guide them
- being flexible with rules and how they are enforced
- finding ways to make schools more supportive of life situations
- helping students get involved in service projects that give back to the community
- helping students access the supports they need, including counselling.

Research in this area shows that children and youth in care, in comparison to their peers, have significantly lower high school completion rates, and are less likely to be employed, have stable and lasting relationships and/or own their own homes. Data from Alberta Education indicates that this pattern, as it relates to high school completion, also is evident in Alberta. Additionally, in Alberta, the number of First Nations, Métis and Inuit children and youth in care is close to 60 percent, a significant disproportionate representation in comparison to the percentage of the overall population of Aboriginal people in the province.

Promising practices identified in the Government of Alberta's unpublished draft *Children and youth in care: strategies for success in school* (January 2008) include the following.

- Forming collaborative cross-sectoral teams and providing joint training to teams that include caseworkers, child/youth (as appropriate), educators, caregivers and other service providers significant in the child/youth's life that focus on building individual plans designed to increase success in school and high school completion and on building professional relationships that increase understanding and trust between sectors.
- Identifying and employing strategies such as personalized learning that are strength-based and incorporate the child/youth's interests and aspirations as part of the learning process.

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- Establishing caring and supportive relationships between the child/youth and teachers, and working to maximize the stability of placements and minimize schools moves, particularly those that occur during the school year.
- Providing young children with the opportunity to participate in early intervention/ learning programs to facilitate language, social/emotional and developmental attainment prior to entering school.
- Planning to address financial barriers to participation in extracurricular activities.
- Developing information-sharing mechanisms that respect the child/youth's right to privacy and that ensure those providing services to the child/youth have the information they need to effectively perform their role.
- Ensuring any specialized supports that are required, including transition supports, are provided to maximize the child/youth's success in school.

A special report of British Columbia's Provincial Health Officer (2007, pp. xii–xiv) put forward recommendations for multiple ministries to work together to improve the educational outcomes for children in continuing or temporary care including:

- enhance data collection and reporting processes
- implement an early development instrument for every child entering school
- assess all children on reading, writing and numeracy skills
- assess and report on the adequacy and effectiveness of resources dedicated to the special needs of children in care
- enhance mobility reporting ensuring common education plans are jointly developed and regularly monitored
- devise a strategy to identify and address the needs of Aboriginal children in care
- provide financial and other supports for youth transitions
- pilot and evaluate innovative programs.

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COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS RUBRIC

Community Engagement

Not Evident	Emerging	
☐ Leaders are aware that few stakeholder groups participate in school programs or improvement plans, and that barriers to collaboration may exist between the school and community.	☐ Leaders are aware that community participation in school programs or activities is marginal and there are plans to increase the relationships and partnerships between the school and community agencies or groups.	☐ Le im eli sc int pa re pr iss et so fa

Community Awareness and Support

Not Evident	Emerging	
☐ Leaders and staff view the school as separate from the larger community; e.g., community support is limited to fundraising and occasional public events.	☐ Leaders and staff create some opportunities to engage community members and agencies in school activities and in supporting students and families.	☐ Le to in fa ab th su co

Business Engagement

Not Evident	Emerging	
☐ School leaders and staff rarely engage employers to participate, except as guest speakers and/or to provide donations for school events.	☐ School leaders and staff occasionally engage employers in partnerships that provide some students with learning interactions at least once during the school year.	☐ Sc re th th fu sc ex pa go pr go

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Evident	Exemplary
aders have regularly developed and plemented collaborative processes to minate barriers to partnerships between hools and the community. Leaders entionally engage existing and prospective rtners in dialogue to strengthen lationships, connections and actions that omote open and explicit dialogue related to ues around learning, well-being, hnic/cultural traditions and values, and cioeconomic backgrounds of students and milies.	☐ Leaders work collaboratively to consistently promote and strengthen partnerships that eliminate barriers between school and the community and that address local issues related to learning, health, ethnicity, socioeconomic backgrounds and other factors that have an impact on student learning and family functioning. Leaders engage the community through forums, town hall meetings and other events; school staff makes home visits to new students to welcome them into the school community; and cross-sector services are available to students and families within the school.

Evident	Exemplary
aders and staff create multiple opportunities engage community members and agencies school activities that support students and milies and in regular and open dialogue out issues, strengths and access to services at build the social infrastructure necessary to pport families and students within the mmunity.	☐ Leaders and staff engage the community and local agencies in mapping supports and needed services within the community that impact student learning and family functioning. Community partners are actively engaged in school improvement planning, implementation, and analysis of data related to student outcomes to increase collaborative actions to support vulnerable children, youth and families.

Evident	Exemplary
hool leaders, staff, students and parents gularly promote employer engagement in e school and explore their vested interest in e learning and achievement of students as ture employees. Employers partner with hools to design and provide rich learning periences for all students and actively rtner in achieving the change/improvement als. Employers receive regular updates on ogress toward key improvement/change als and targets.	☐ School leaders, staff, students and parents consistently collaborate with employers to provide rich and varied learning experiences for students such as work experience, student internships, career mentoring and job shadowing. Employer and community partners provide opportunities for students to showcase learning/accomplishments, develop joint community projects, and target the actual needs of employers and the community related to future employment. Employers receive and incorporate updates from school/jurisdiction improvement processes into their community development initiatives.

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VII. Positive Connections

SYNOPSIS OF LITERATURE

Fostering positive connections refers to supports and services that enhance the engagement and success of students—academically, socially, emotionally, culturally, spiritually, physically and behaviourally. There are a number of successful supports and services already in place in many Alberta schools, such as Effective Behaviour Supports and bullying prevention programs that create a school environment that is inviting, safe and student focused.

As a starting point, the literature on school engagement advocates consulting, through listening and reciprocal communication, with students to understand their insights, experiences and perspectives related to learning. This might begin with structured conversations related to how students receive feedback, set goals for themselves, reflect on their preferred ways of learning, and demonstrate knowledge or applied skills. These types of focused conversations can help students and school staff identify what conditions are needed for students to feel valued and be contributing members of the school community.

The East Sussex Project on Personalized Learning in England held sessions with students to determine how best to implement personalized learning in schools (Innovation Unit, Rudduck, Brown and Hendy, 2006, p. 16). The school staff worked collaboratively with students to develop an agenda for change. The feedback indicated students and teachers wanted the following:

- feedback that was individualized, non-routine and formative
- target setting that was individualized, negotiated and realistic
- teaching and course design that engaged students and reflected their preferred ways of learning/working
- mentoring that enabled teachers to get to know students as individuals so that students knew they each mattered
- rewards that recognized and valued all students; i.e., offered things that students valued
- real and responsible tasks that made students feel they were trusted and could make a significant contribution to the school community.

Parent involvement in their children's education has a significant impact on student learning and outcomes achieved. In Alberta, family life continues to change. There are increasing numbers of single parent families, blended families and families without extended family supports. At the same time, more parents are working longer hours and this impacts their ability to engage with their children. Poverty, financial stress, family violence and/or dysfunction all impact the school's ability to connect with parents and involve them as active partners in their child's learning and development.

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The literature on effective parent involvement supports the following actions.

- Support or sponsor activities that provide opportunities for families to learn and play together.
- Schedule activities to maximize parent participation.
- Engage parents in school improvement and school decision-making through outreach and communication strategies.
- Value parent delegates, such as grandparents, who support parents in their role and provide support to children and youth.
- Encourage parent networking to reduce isolation and promote positive parenting and problem solving.
- Develop partnerships with community agencies that provide support services for families struggling or who are at risk.
- Support and enable access to parenting classes through partnerships with Parent Link Centres and/or other community agencies. Some types of parent education that may be particularly beneficial to schools include sessions on understanding ways to help their children learn, dealing effectively with bullying, parenting tough kids and/or parenting teens.

Weiss and Westmoreland (2008, p. 10) looked at lessons learned from the evolution of Boston Public Schools' family and community engagement strategy, which identified increasing family involvement in education as a critical strategy for student success. They identified a number of actions to do this, including:

- expand the definition of parent involvement
- make family engagement a priority that schools must plan and evaluate as part of the planning and reporting cycle
- identify key contacts for parents within schools
- focus family engagement on student learning
- provide specific training for teachers and administrators to enhance their communication and partnerships with families
- provide training for parents to enhance their ability to assume leadership roles on school teams.

MENTORING

Mentoring of vulnerable children and youth has received increased interest in recent years. According to various sources (DeWit et al 2006; Dubois et al 2002; Grossman and Tierney 1998; Hererra et al 2007; cited in Rhodes 2008, p. 35), research on the effectiveness of mentoring programs is somewhat limited; however, evaluations of formal mentoring programs that involve one-to-one mentoring, usually adult-to-child/youth, provide evidence that they are effective in promoting improved social, behavioural and academic outcomes. Anecdotal feedback from children and youth engaged in mentoring relationships makes clear their belief that mentoring significantly impacts their lives and their belief in themselves as persons of worth and promise.

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In Alberta, Satchwell (2007) reviewed the literature on a variety of effective mentoring models and structures and reported that one-to-one, informal, formal, group and peer mentoring strategies can result in fewer absences, more positive attitudes towards school, better relations with parents, greater expectations for success, and improved school-family connectedness. These and other benefits were most evident among disadvantaged and Aboriginal youth, as well as new immigrants.

Mentoring is based on strengthening protective factors related to resiliency. Rhodes and Lowe (2008, p. 9) include mentoring in a cluster of three protective factors that foster psychological resilience. They include characteristics of the individual such as temperament and intelligence; characteristics of the family such as nurturing, warmth and financial security; and characteristics of the community including connections to nonrelated adults who are positive role models and who care. Schools also are an important participant in promoting resilience.

A meta-analysis completed by Dubois , Holloway, Valentine and Cooper (2002) is cited in Dubois (2007, p. 8) as the most rigorous scientific study on the effectiveness of youth mentoring. Programs included in the analysis were based on one-to-one mentoring of adults to mentees less than 19 years of age. The researchers summarized existing studies and identified elements of effective mentoring programs. It is important to note that few of the programs studied included follow-up assessment data. There was considerable variation in the magnitude of effects in comparison to that of other prevention programs. Relationship length, closeness, clear expectations, a focus on specific youth-invested goals and support to the mentors were all important in outcomes achieved.

Longevity of relationships appears to be a key factor in the effectiveness of mentoring programs. Rhodes and Lowe (2008, p. 11) cite that "... positive effects on youth outcomes become progressively stronger as relationships persisted for longer periods of time. Natural mentoring relationships that endure for multiple years have also shown the strongest effects." The authors also noted that length of the relationship by itself is insufficient to account for the positive outcomes identified in the literature, as regular contact and the quality of the mentor/mentee relationship also is important.

Focus on meeting the developmental needs of the child/youth participating in mentoring programs and understanding the cultural influences in the child/youth's life are important to achieving positive outcomes. Modelling of relevant real-life behaviours that will assist the mentee in performing successfully at school, home and in the community or workforce and in refraining from actions that may encourage the mentee to act inappropriately also was noted as important in the research.

Langhout, Rhodes & Osborne (2004, pp. 303–304) noted that "positive outcomes are more likely to emerge when mentors engage in moderate levels of activity and impose some degree of structure and expectation. In other words, it appears that mentoring relationships characterized by structure, activity and expectations (i.e., unconditional support) are more beneficial than mentoring relationships characterized by little structure, low activity and unconditional support."

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The literature also identifies the importance of quality training and support for mentors so that evidence-based practices can be implemented successfully. Lack of training and support can impair the formation of strong trusting relationships between mentors and vulnerable children/youth, and can contribute to misuse of power, breaches of confidentiality and broken commitments or communication blocks. The *Be a mentor program: Training guide for volunteer mentors* (2006, p. 7) states that various practices of ineffective mentors contribute to mentor attrition, including having difficulty meeting with the mentee on a regular basis, attempting to transform or reform the mentee, emphasizing behaviour changes over development of mutual trust and respect, and attempting to instill a set of values inconsistent with those the mentee is exposed to at home.

A recent study of Big Brothers Big Sisters America school-based mentoring programs (Herrera et al 2007), completed in response to emergent interest in the efficacy of school-based mentoring programs in the United States, found the following results.

- School-based mentoring (SBM) programs were diverse in both structure and focus (p. iii).
- SBM programs were not tutoring programs; only nine percent cited academic improvement as their central focus (p. iii).
- SBM programs reached students who were at risk (80 percent of youth participating lived in poverty and/or in lone-parent families and 77 percent experienced difficulty in one or more areas of risk, specifically academic performance, school behaviour, relationships and youth-reported misconduct); and SBM programs attracted a diverse group of volunteers; e.g., high school and college students, many of whom would not have volunteered in community-based programs (p. iv).
- After one year, mentees experienced improvements in overall academic performance, quality of class work, school attendance, feeling more competent academically, and feeling more connected to someone who cared about what happens to them and influenced the choices they made (p. iv).

The effect sizes of the first school year impacts were modest and many were not sustained, with the exception of skipping school, if children and youth participating did not continue to receive mentoring support in the second year. Only 52 percent of participant children or youth continued to receive mentoring in the second year. For those, longer matches and closer relationships with their mentors were associated with stronger impacts (Herrera et al 2007, p. iv).

Recommendations for SBM programs articulated in the study (Herrera et al 2007 p. vi) included:

- start matches as early in the school year as possible
- ensure volunteer mentors provide at least one year of mentoring
- build relationships with feeder schools to sustain matches and to provide children/youth with consistency through school transitions
- select schools supportive of mentoring and fostering mentoring partnerships
- explore strategies to bridge the summer gap
- explore strategies to provide volunteers, particularly young volunteers, with ongoing support and training needed to create high-quality and effective mentoring relationships.

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The province of Alberta, through the Alberta Mentoring Partnership, has entered into a unique partnership between government ministries and the not-for-profit sector to enhance mentoring services throughout the province. Targeted goals in the development of a strategic plan are to:

- focus on building awareness of the important role mentors play in the lives of young people
- boost recruitment and retention of mentors
- strengthen the ability of schools to access and create school mentorship programs in partnership with community agencies
- build the capacity of organizations, particularly in rural Alberta, to successfully establish and sustain mentoring program.

Related to cross-age peer mentoring, small single randomized studies have consistently demonstrated positive findings. Key outcomes include improved attitudes toward and connectedness to school and peers; increased self efficacy, academic achievement and social skills; reduction in behaviour problems; and gains in conventional attitudes toward illicit and antisocial behaviour (Karcher 2005; Bowman et al 1987; Stoltz 2005; Sheehan et al 1999; cited in Karcher 2007, p. 7). Benefits for mentors include improvements in moral reasoning, empathy, accepting responsibility and more favourable connection to school. It is important to note that when cross-age peer mentoring is not adequately guided, supervised and supported by adults, the programs are not as effective and have the potential to be harmful (Karcher, 2007, p. 8).

Evidence from the literature suggests the following elements are important for effective cross-age peer mentoring programs (Karcher 2007, pp. 11–12).

1. Mentors are trained in a developmental approach to avoid becoming tutors.
2. Mentors are selected based on greater social interest than self-interest.
3. Mentors and mentees have at least a two-year age difference, and the mentors are high school or junior high students deemed to be mature by teachers, parents and other adults who know them.
4. Programs provide mentors sufficient structure to keep the matches actively engaged, but the mentor's focus remains on strengthening the relationship.
5. Mentoring interactions are monitored to ensure mentors do not reinforce/model inappropriate behaviour.
6. Mentees are taught how best to utilize their mentors for support.
7. Mentors are required to participate in formal termination or closure processes.

In *Designing a cross-age peer mentoring program* (Karcher 2007, pp. 19–20), "the following diagrams are designed to help program staff determine the appropriateness of using a cross-age peer mentoring model—based on available research—given factors of program design (setting, match structure, and mentee age) and the desired outcomes of the program."

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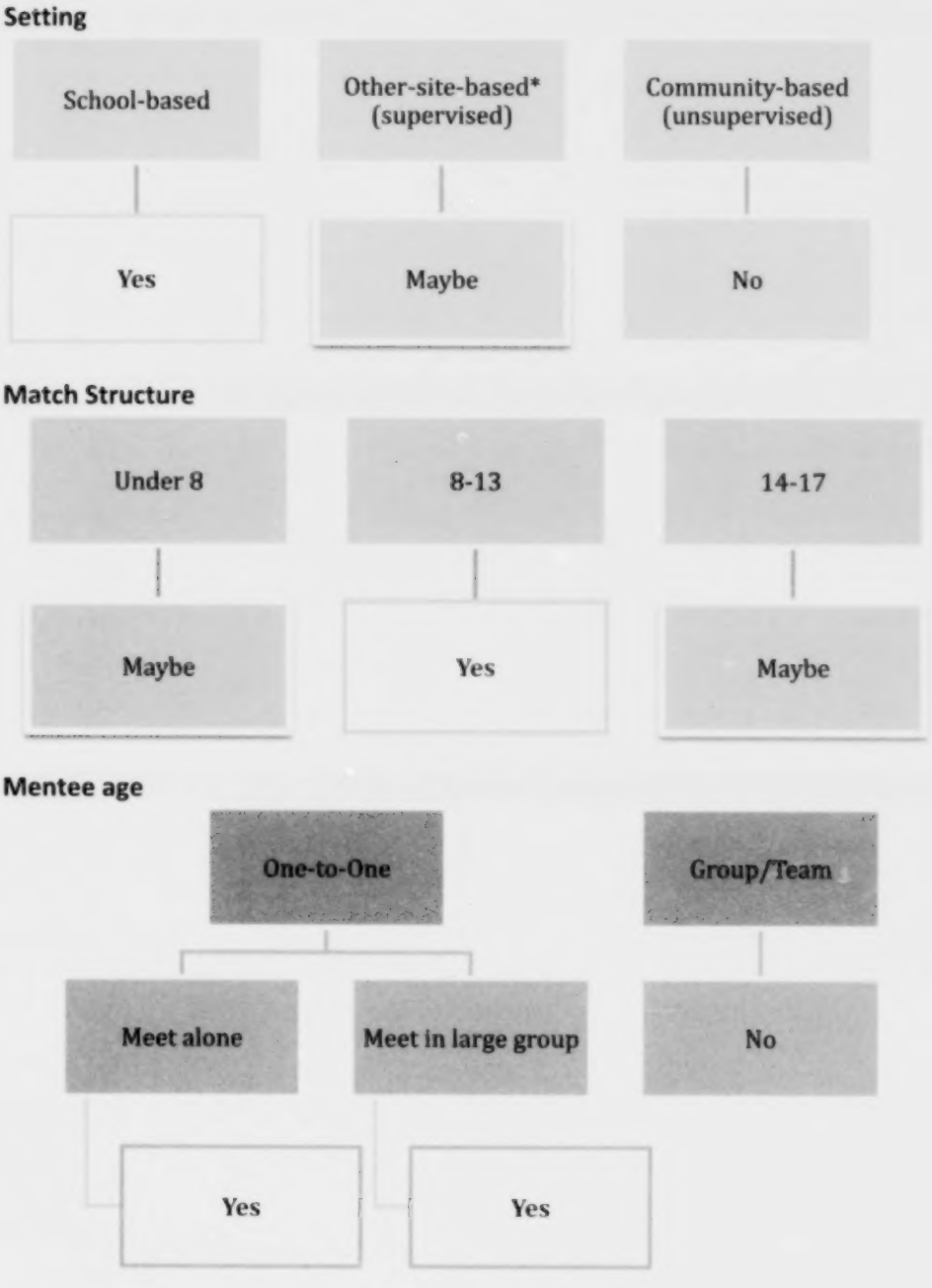
Figure 1: **Program Design Factors**: Should your program consider using cross-age peer mentoring model based on your program's structure?



If yes or maybe ...

What are the implications of cross-age peer mentoring on program practices?

*Includes site-based programs that do not take place in school or after-school settings (e.g., faith-based, juvenile justice, etc.).

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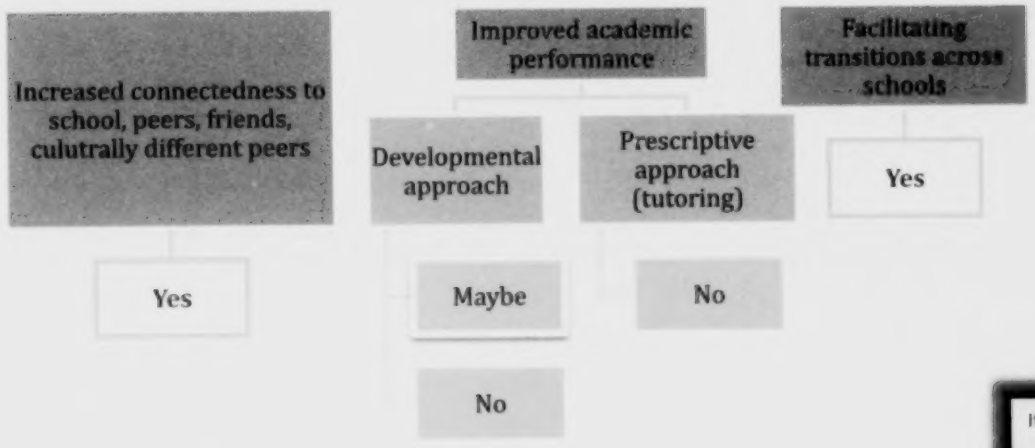
Figure 2: **Desired Program Outcomes:** Should your program consider using a cross-age peer mentoring model based on these desired program outcomes?

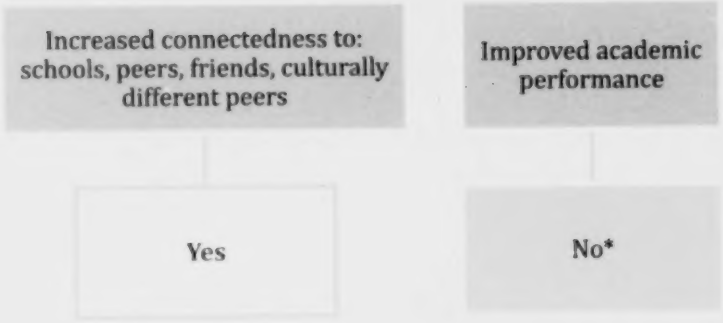
Mentees



If yes or maybe ...

What are the implications of cross-age peer mentoring on program practices?

Mentors



*Programs seeking improved academic outcomes should consider involving these youth as mentees rather than mentors.

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Figure 1: Program Design Factors: Should your program consider using cross-age peer mentoring model based on your program's structure?

Setting

School-based	Other-site-based* (supervised)	Community-based (unsupervised)
Yes	Maybe	No

Match Structure

Under 8	8-13	14-17
Maybe	Yes	Maybe

Mentee age

One-to-One		Group/Team
Meet alone	Meet in large group	No
Yes	Yes	

If yes or maybe ...

What are the implications of cross-age peer mentoring on program practices?

*Includes site-based programs that do not take place in school or after-school settings (e.g., faith-based, community centre, etc.)

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Figure 2: **Desired Program Outcomes:** Should your program consider using a cross-age peer mentoring model based on these desired program outcomes?

Mentees

Increased connectedness to school, peers, friends, culutrally different peers	Improved academic performance		Facilitating transitions across schools
	Developmental approach	Prescriptive approach (tutoring)	Yes
Yes	Maybe	No	
	No		

If yes or maybe ...

What are the implications of cross-age peer mentoring on program practices?

Mentors

Increased connectedness to: schools, peers, friends, culturally different peers	Improved academic performance
Yes	No*

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RESILIENCY

If we think we are fragile and broken,
we will live a fragile, broken life.
If we believe we are strong and wise,
we will live with enthusiasm and
courage.
The way we name ourselves
colours the way we live.
Who we are is in our own eyes.
We must be careful
how we name ourselves.
(Wayne Muller)

Research on resiliency focuses on trying to understand what factors or conditions increase the adaptive functioning of children and youth who are struggling to cope with adverse life experiences. This is of significant interest to educators because students who are resilient have the capacity to overcome challenging circumstances without giving up, opting out, striking out or losing belief in their ability to create a positive future for themselves. Resiliency has been defined by Hammond (2008, p. 2) as "the capability of children and adolescents to cope successfully in the face of stress-related, at-risk or adversarial situations."

Interest in strengthening resilience of children and youth has been the subject of national dialogue, as evidenced by the National Dialogue of Resilience in Youth, 2008. In the foundation document (p. 24), the role of schools and school principals was highlighted. "If schools are identified as being crucial in developing resilience in youth, then school leaders certainly have a role to play. School principals were, therefore, recognized as being particularly important, both in setting a tone for their school and in making a more direct impact by initiating relationships with their students."

Resiliency Canada (Hammond 2008, p. 3) developed the visual depicted below that identifies the 31 developmental strengths framework that identifies the protective factors that strengthen or enhance the resiliency and well-being of children and youth. Research to develop this Youth Resiliency Model was based on survey data from more than 65,000 Canadian youth from grades 3 to 12.

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Many researchers, in studying resiliency, believe that, in the end, resiliency comes down to key concepts. The first is relationships. Various authors were cited in *Working paper #1* of the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2004, p. 1) as stating that "relationships are the 'active ingredients' of the environment's influence on healthy human development. They incorporate the qualities that best promote competence and well-being—individualized responsiveness, mutual action and interaction, and an emotional connection to another human being, be it a parent, peer, grandparent, aunt, uncle, neighbour, teacher, coach, or any other person who has an important impact on the child's early development." In terms of practice, staff working with young people. faced with adversity in their lives or circumstances that place them at-risk can only be effective if they can develop strong positive relationships that are characterized by trust and caring.

Hammond (2005, p. 11) comments that, based on 40 years of research, the best predictors of successful change are two factors: 1) engagement in meaningful relationships, and 2) engagement in meaningful activities. Eighty-three percent of change involves these two factors and 17 percent of change can be attributed to techniques or strategies employed to facilitate change.

To create the conditions to enhance resilience, staff must engage students as partners in the process. This means they need to explore and incorporate goals the student is truly invested in, and agree together how they will reach the identified goals in an atmosphere of caring and belief in the student's ability to make the change needed. This collaborative process is one that ensures flexibility to adapt and adjust in response to emergent circumstances. The importance of children and youth actively participating in the development of interventions that are built to support them cannot be overstated. Children and youth need to have both voice and choice in the process, as do their families. The services provided need to "fit" the individual and his or her definition of the problem to be solved, and the services need to promote, to the greatest extent possible, self-confidence and optimism in the individual's ability to cope with whatever adversity he or she faces.

Staff also needs to take the time and effort to see the resilience beneath problem behaviours. This means staff needs to get to know and understand the situations that these young people face, the fact that risk has a cumulative effect in a child's life and that there is a complex interplay of factors and processes that protect them or put them at risk. This also takes time and requires active listening to their thoughts and feelings and the ability to read the "subtext" of conversations and actions. Subtext refers to the meanings, attributions and world views that underlie their actions or words. Failure to understand subtext usually results in ineffectual patterns of reacting to presenting behaviours without identifying the underlying issue so that change to more functional behaviour can be completed.

Being effective also involves identifying the strength or adaptive functions of behaviour, even those that may, on the surface, appear maladaptive. Research on resiliency is focused on studying strengths, not dysfunction, and on designing programs or strategies that build on these strengths rather than addressing the risks directly. The capacity to cope is contextually based. What may be functional and adaptive in one situation may appear inappropriate or maladaptive in another. This pattern is seen in the case of traumatized children and youth where survival behaviour that is functional in one context is problematic in another; e.g., at school. Anticipating and reducing threat or risk in a situation is one of the first steps in reducing negative reactive behaviours, and improving one's belief in one's own ability to cope or handle new or stressful situations.

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Finally, to have the most powerful impact from a planning perspective, the design of services to promote resiliency needs to include responsiveness, flexibility and multilayered strategies and supports. As resiliency is impacted by experience and perceptions that cross all life domains and occur in so many contexts, the approaches schools take to build student capacity to be resilient also need to reflect the complexity of these dynamic and interactive variables.

In efforts to increase the resiliency of children and youth at risk, it may be useful to consider specific populations of students; e.g., Aboriginal students whose experiences may include considerable adversity. Many authors note the devastating impact of historical policies designed to assimilate Canada's Aboriginal peoples into western European culture. It also is clear that there is considerable congruence between the theories of resilience and Aboriginal world views.

To be effective, any strategies adopted in working with Aboriginal peoples must reflect this world view and incorporate traditional beliefs and values, recognizing the importance of interconnectedness between individuals, families and communities. Lalonde 2006 (cited in Liebenberg & Ungar, pp. 304–305) states that:

> "Resilience implies transcendence. While there is perhaps no happy ending to be found in the story told by this data, there is hope. Within a population that suffers the highest rate of suicide in any culturally identifiable group in the world, and that even after the '60s scoop continues to see a disproportionate number of children taken into care, there is evidence of resilience. The surprising outcomes—the transcendence—is (sic) not found in the single 'hardy' or 'invulnerable' child who manages to rise above adversity, but in the existence of whole communities that demonstrate the power of culture as a protective factor. When communities succeed in promoting their cultural heritage and in securing control of their own collective future—in claiming ownership over their past and future—the positive effects reverberate across many measures of youth health and well-being."

Any work within Aboriginal communities or involving Aboriginal students, must be respectful and inclusive of Aboriginal perspectives to ensure services are relevant and effective. Examples might include increasing protective factors by including someone important to the child/youth (e.g., mentor, Elder) as part of the school support team and by planning activities that increase valuing their culture, language, traditions and spirituality while fostering peer relationships within the school to promote their sense of identity and belonging. Adding a skill component, such as drumming, that also increases connection and valuing for heritage provides another strategy to promote positive identity for children and youth within the school community.

The following comparison of Aboriginal and resiliency concepts demonstrated the congruence between the two (cited in Liebenberg & Unger 2008, p. 307).

Aboriginal World View	Resilience Concept
• Kinship and connection to each other	• Connection to a community
• Spirituality and respect for nature • Sharing and respect for each other	• Church and religious connections
• Knowledge of history, culture and language	• Contributing to the community/school
• Development of traditional skills; e.g., drumming, dancing, beading	• Sense of identity
• Shared parenting and community responsibility for children	• Healthy parenting

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Brendtro et al (2002, pp. 61–66) identify discouragement as the root of many of the destructive behaviours exhibited by youth at-risk. They advocate for developing a circle of courage to help these youth develop a sense of belonging, mastery, independence and generosity that are foundational to resiliency. The circle of courage is based on Aboriginal childrearing beliefs that foster development of self-worth through nurturing the child/youth's feelings of significance and belonging, competence by providing experiences designed to support the child/youth's sense of mastery, power fostered by encouraging progressive levels of independence, and virtue expressed by generosity as a cherished value.

In the article *"Resilience across cultures"*, Ungar (2008) presents the finding of a study designed to measure global, as well as cultural, factors that influence the development of resiliency in youth (p. 218). Across 14 sites, 1,451 adolescents participated in the quantitative components of the study (p. 223). Based on qualitative data collected from interviews and focus group sessions, researchers identified the following seven "tensions" or factors that accounted for resilience in the youth participating in the study (p. 231).

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Tensions	Explanation
1. Access to material resources	Availability of financial, educational, medical, and employment assistance and/or opportunities; access to food, clothing and shelter. (How these are provided and the degree to which each is expected varied.)
2. Access to supportive relationships	Relationships with significant others, peers and adults within one's family and community. (Relationships often were characterized as the vehicle through which a sense of mastery over crisis was achieved.)
3. Development of a desirable personal identity	Desirable sense of one's self as having a personal and collective sense of purpose; ability for self-appraisal of strengths, weaknesses, aspirations, beliefs and values, including spiritual and religious identification.
4. Experiences of power and control	Experiences of caring for one's self and others; ability to affect change in one's social and physical environment in order to access health resources.
5. Adherence to cultural traditions	Adherence to, or knowledge of, one's local and/or global cultural practices, values and beliefs.
6. Experiences of social justice	Experience related to finding a meaningful role in one's community that brings with it acceptance and social equality. (Study participants had experienced prejudice because of race, sexual orientation and gender, had been victims of violence, and had lived in conditions of poverty and exclusion.)
7. Experiences of a sense of cohesion with others	Balancing one's personal interests with a sense of responsibility to the greater good; feeling a part of something larger than one's self, socially and spiritually.

Ungar notes that "youth who experience themselves as resilient and are seen by their communities as resilient are those that successfully navigate their way through these tensions, each in his or her own way, and according to the strengths and resources available to the youth personally, in his or her family, community and culture (p. 231). ... By implication, projects that work well with youth in one context are not necessarily going to work well in another (p. 234)." The following are some questions to ponder about resilience.

Leadership Questions to Ponder

- What is your definition of resilience?
- Does staff see enhancing the resilience of students as integral to teaching and learning? What evidence supports this belief?
- What actions do you and your staff consistently takes to promote the resilience of children and youth at risk?
- Do students see you as nurturing and caring? How do you know?
- What behaviours or circumstances indicate that a student is at risk? Do all staff members agree?
- Are classroom and school management/disciplinary practices/policies designed to penalize or to build the sense of mastery and success of students? What evidence supports this belief?

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POSITIVE CONNECTIONS RUBRIC

Parent Engagement

Not Evident	Emerging	
☐ Parent involvement in the school is minimal and characterized by volunteering to assist with specific tasks such as hot lunch programs or acting as "cheerleaders" for the school/jurisdiction.	☐ Parents are inconsistently involved in school change/improvement processes but have a general awareness of plans to accomplish change/improvement.	☐
☐ School council members participate inconsistently and are rarely consulted in decision-making for the school.	☐ School council members are meaningfully engaged in many aspects of school improvement/change processes and have a good working knowledge of change processes. The school council's input is sought throughout the design, implementation and evaluation of improvement/change plans.	☐

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Evident	Exemplary
Parents have multiple and frequent opportunities to engage as partners in change/improvement processes and receive regular updates of progress toward goals and targets. Parents are active partners in school improvement, school decision-making and student learning; and participate in professional development days and school improvement workshops that are designed to seek and incorporate their input into planning, implementation and evaluation of goals and strategies. Parents partner with school staff and students to develop student learning plans and IPPs.	☐ Parents are actively engaged and committed to student learning and change/improvement processes. Parent representatives serve on key committees throughout the school/jurisdiction and are voting members on school decision-making bodies. Parents, through the school council, take a leadership role in facilitating opportunities for all parents to participate and provide input into improvement/change processes and demonstrate investment, commitment and support toward achieving goals and targets identified in these plans.
School council members provide leadership and advice, participate in decision-making, and work collaboratively with school leaders, staff, students and community partners to achieve the improvement/change goals and targets.	☐ School council members act as leaders in promoting needed change/improvement and provide advice, advocacy and support to other parents, school leaders and staff, and community partners. School council members are actively engaged in decision-making at the school.

Student Engagement

Not Evident	Emerging	
☐ Students are marginally aware of school improvement/change efforts and are passive recipients of change processes.	☐ Students are somewhat involved in change/ improvement processes through student councils or through participation on design teams. These students are marginally representative of the diverse student groups within the school.	☐

Social Equity

Not Evident	Emerging	
☐ The school/jurisdiction demonstrates minimal evidence that all students have access to high-quality instruction designed to address their individual learning needs and strengths.	☐ The school/jurisdiction provides sufficient evidence that access to high-quality instruction, designed to address individual learning needs and strengths, occurs for some students. Faculty and leaders may not believe all students are capable of high-quality work.	☐
☐ Criteria for placement in classrooms, courses or programs are unclear or inconsistently followed.	☐ Criteria for placement in classrooms, courses or programs are clear and followed in some cases.	☐

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Evident	Exemplary
Students have regular opportunities to provide student perspectives on change/improvement processes and their perspectives are incorporated into the planning, implementation and evaluation of change/improvement processes. Care is taken to ensure representation of different student groups on working committees related to change/ improvement. Students participate on teacher committees to help shape learning activities and project topics. Students assist in developing partnerships with employers and community agencies that provide services to students and families.	Students consistently plan and lead consultation processes with other students to obtain their perspectives on needed change/improvement processes and report this as part of committee work to staff, parents and community partners engaged in the change/improvement processes. Students participate on school committees as voting members of site leadership teams. Students regularly participate in school forums, on task groups and on other committees to ensure that youth have voice and choice during planning, implementation and evaluation of change/improvement plans. Students play key roles in developing partnerships with employers and community agencies that provide services to students and families.

Evident	Exemplary
The school/jurisdiction provides substantive evidence of equitable access to high-quality instruction for the majority of students. Most classroom teachers are able to personalize learning to take advantage of individual strengths and interests while accommodating individual student learning needs. School leaders and staff expect high-quality work from most students and those who require additional assistance or support receive it.	The school/jurisdiction provides consistent and compelling evidence of equal access to high-quality instruction for all students. All staff has high expectation for all students and is committed to assisting each student in being successful at learning, relating to others and becoming a responsible, contributing and caring citizen.
Criteria for placement in classrooms, courses or programs are clear and followed in many cases.	Criteria for placement in classrooms, courses or programs are clear, consistently followed, designed to provide multiple pathways to access and developed to meet the diverse learning needs of students.

Social Equity

Not Evident	Emerging	
☐ Students with special needs may not receive the services and supports they need to be successful. Opportunities for students to take more challenging courses are limited.	☐ Specialized services and supports are available for students at either end of the learning spectrum (advanced courses for gifted or academically proficient students and for those with moderate to severe disabilities) but not for other students. Students who need less intensive support may not receive it or receive it on a limited basis. Multicultural diversity is accepted but student needs related to diversity are marginally or inconsistently accommodated. Students are recognized primarily for academic achievement.	☐
☐ School-wide discipline systems are not evident and are not administered consistently or equitably.	☐ School-wide discipline systems established may not always be clear or followed as intended.	☐
☐ Some sub-populations of students have needs that go unmet and longitudinal data on student achievement and course/high school completion rates shows patterns of underachievement and differences related to suspension and expulsion data for some groups within the student population.	☐ School achievement, suspension and expulsion data is sometimes disaggregated and reviewed to identify sub-populations of students who underachieve/fail to complete courses or attend classes and plans are underway to address the perceived inequities.	☐

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Evident	Exemplary
Multicultural diversity is showcased and viewed as an asset within the school. Students are recognized for academic, cultural, athletic, fine arts and other achievements. Specialized supports and services are available for most students who require it. Multicultural diversity is regularly accommodated within instructional practice and school wide activities, and success in domains other than academic is celebrated in meaningful and public ways.	☐ Students who need extra help are identified early and consistently receive the services and supports they need to be successful. Cultural activities that represent those reflected in the school and larger community are an integral and valued part of the school culture. Students are recognized for a wide range of achievement across many domains, and showcasing of student work and accomplishments extends beyond the school/jurisdiction into the community as part of celebrating student success.
School-wide discipline systems are fair to all students and are regularly administered consistently and equitably.	☐ School-wide discipline systems are collaboratively developed with staff, students, parents and partners to ensure clarity, fairness and equitable implementation.
School achievement, course completion, attendance, suspension and expulsion data is consistently analyzed and disaggregated to identify sub-populations of students who underachieve/fail to complete courses or attend classes. Plans are fully developed and being implemented to address issues of equity within the school population as a whole and to improve educational outcomes for sub-populations of students identified.	☐ Reviews of student achievement, course completions, attendance, suspension/expulsion, and high school completion data, when disaggregated, shows no groups of students are disproportionately represented.

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VIII. Tracking Progress

SYNOPSIS OF LITERATURE

Regularly scheduled analysis of student, school and jurisdiction data is essential for identifying trends and contributing factors related to early school leaving. Developing data-driven early warning systems is a foundational action in elementary, junior and senior high schools as part of their collective efforts to reduce early school leaving.

Meaningful data collection should include demographic variables such as attendance patterns, low course completion patterns or academic performance issues, as well as presence of risk factors and absence of protective factors. Some key questions for school jurisdictions and schools to ask include:

- Who are the students at risk of early school leaving?
- Why are students not completing high school?
- What are the indicators that a student may drop out and when does it occur?
- What data do we already collect and what data do we need to start collecting?
- What is the magnitude of the problem for our jurisdiction and what schools are impacted in larger numbers?
- Who needs to be involved in planning to increase success for these students in our school and/or jurisdiction?

Key indicators of school improvement, adapted from Goldring and Berends' book, *Leading with data: Pathways to improve your school* (2009, pp. 23–42), follow.

- Staff shares commitment to clearly defined standards and targets for improving high school completion developed through analysis of data from Alberta Education, the jurisdiction and the school.
- Measures and targets are few in number and carefully selected to provide evidence of progress toward identified targets.

- Critical reflection, analysis of student results, attendance, connection and engagement are used regularly to measure incremental steps to goal attainment.
- School jurisdictions and schools are selective in planning and implementing strategies to enhance consistency and effectiveness of improvement strategies that are implemented across the system.

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C. Culture of Inquiry

- Teachers work collaboratively to learn from one another to improve instructional practice.
- The norm is to question and challenge current practices and procedures, and to investigate promising or innovative practices in a supportive learning environment. Teachers model their behaviour as leaders and learners simultaneously.
- Problem solving and debate are valued, and action research to evaluate and adapt new practice is central to school and system functioning.
- Teachers consistently seek ways to strengthen relationships with students and design learning activities that are responsive to student interests, strengths, needs and learning styles.

D. Partnerships

- The relationship and connection between home and school is supported by well-defined parent partnerships and is focused on improving student outcomes.
- Community partnerships provide additional support for students, particularly for students who have experienced trauma or have special education needs, mental health needs or challenging circumstances to work through.
- School–community engagement is designed to support students and families holistically and to create expanded networks of support.

E. Resources

- Leaders at all levels need to champion agreed-upon improvement strategies and provide the resources necessary for successful implementation. This includes policy, budget and human resources.

1. Rigorous content, standards and well-defined and understood targets and measures.
2. Alignment to standards, meaningful data gathering and effective implementation.
3. Expert teachers supported by effective professional development.
4. Culture of inquiry, caring and commitment to students.
5. Partnerships with parents, families, cross-sectoral and community agencies.
6. Resources aligned with goals and targets.
Shared commitment to boosting high school completion rates

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For jurisdiction and school-based leaders the use of data to inform practice through analysis of results is foundational to improvement efforts. Alberta Education, through the Accountability Pillar of the Renewed Funding Framework, provides school jurisdictions and schools with data including Provincial Achievement Test and Diploma Examination results to assist them in identifying strengths and areas where change is needed. An excerpt from the *Guide for Education Planning and Results Reporting* (2007, pp. 1–3), published by Alberta Education, provides the following description of the Accountability Pillar.

> "The Accountability Pillar places increased emphasis on achieving outcomes, reporting results and using results for informed decision-making for the purpose of improving programs and student results in subsequent years. School jurisdiction performance is measured, evaluated and reported by comparing current results against both past performance and provincial standards on a common set of measures for all jurisdictions, using a common evaluation methodology. School boards continue to be accountable for meeting the learning needs of all students and ensuring that provincial legislation, regulations, policies and standards are met."

The *Guide for Education Planning and Reporting* (2007, pp. 1–5) states the following:

"The Accountability Pillar enhances the use of measurement in performance management of school jurisdictions. It includes:

- an expanded set of performance measures (that address outcomes of importance to parents and the public)
- results of consistent surveys of parents, students and teachers, administered annually by Alberta Education
- standard methodology to evaluate results
- consistent, accessible data reports to jurisdictions for use in jurisdiction and school planning and reporting.

Each measure within the Accountability Pillar is evaluated on two bases: achievement and improvement, then given an overall evaluation that combines the achievement and improvement evaluations. Four years of results are used to evaluate a measure.

The achievement evaluation compares the current jurisdiction result against fixed standards for each measure, which are set by selecting the 5th, 25th, 75th and 95th percentiles on the distribution of all jurisdictions' baseline three-year average results. These standards are held constant for seven to 10 years. The comparison of the current result to the standards results in one of the following achievement levels:

- very high (blue) for results at or above the 95th percentile
- high (green) for results between the 75th and 95th percentiles
- intermediate (yellow) for results between the 25th and 75th percentiles
- low (orange) for results between the 5th and 25th percentiles
- very low (red) for results below the 5th percentile.

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The **improvement** evaluation compares the current jurisdiction result with the prior three-year jurisdiction average result for each measure, using a statistical test to determine the extent of change. This results in one of the following improvement levels: improved significantly (blue); improved (green); maintained (yellow); declined (orange); declined significantly (red).

The evaluations of improvement and achievement are combined for the **overall** evaluation of the measure, resulting in one of the following overall evaluations for the measure: excellent (blue); good (green); acceptable (yellow); issue (orange); concern (red)."

Schools and school jurisdictions also will be able to access disaggregated data to assist in their improvement efforts.

If the purpose of accountability is to improve student achievement, a well-designed accountability system has at least three levels. Reeves (2002, p. 157) described robust accountability systems as holistic or student centred. His descriptors of the levels of accountability are as follows:

- The first level includes system-wide indicators, such as those outlined as part of the Accountability Pillar in Alberta, that apply to every school and school jurisdiction in the province and those created by the school jurisdiction for every school in their system.
- The second level of accountability includes specific school-based measures and targets that are designed to meet the needs of students served.
- The third level of accountability is related to analyzing the data using a school context or narrative and to identify the relationships and connections between them. This provides school leaders with the opportunity to provide the context through which results can be understood.

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IX. Tools

Tool 1: Early Warning Checklist for Vulnerable Children and Youth

Tool 2: Student Exit Survey

Tool 3: Leading Change Planning Guide

Tool 4: Instructional Leadership Staff Survey

Tool 5: Effective Transitions Checklist

Tool 6: School–Community Partnership Perception Check

Tool 7: Checklist for Developing an Aboriginal Mentoring Program

Tool 8: Student Engagement Survey

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TOOL 1: EARLY WARNING CHECKLIST FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The following indicators are congruent with the literature about students who are at risk of leaving school prior to completing their high school diploma. The higher the number of risk factors, or the earlier they appear, the more likely the student may need additional supports to complete his or her high school diploma.

The literature indicates that developing and implementing strategies to mitigate the identified risk factors has significant impact on helping students to successfully complete their high school education and to become successful, caring and contributing members of the community.

Risk Factor	No	Yes	Significant Impact
Student absenteeism from school is higher than the norm.	❑	❑	❑
Student disabilities negatively impact learning/achievement/participation at school.	❑	❑	❑
Student's psychological or mental health problems negatively impact attendance or performance at school.	❑	❑	❑
Student demonstrates behavioural excesses that negatively impact his or her learning or that of other students.	❑	❑	❑
Student belongs to a minority group and has limited English language proficiency in communicating orally and/or in writing.	❑	❑	❑
Student lives in poverty.	❑	❑	❑
Student exhibits dissatisfaction/alienation/low attachment to school.	❑	❑	❑
Student has experienced more than four school moves.	❑	❑	❑
Student is living apart from biological parent(s).	❑	❑	❑
Student has experienced abuse, trauma and/or family dysfunction.	❑	❑	❑
The parent(s) or caregiver(s) have low expectations/low value for educational achievement.	❑	❑	❑
Student has adult responsibilities such as parenting and/or difficulties accessing child care.	❑	❑	❑
Student is exposed to or participating in high-risk behaviours such as substance abuse.	❑	❑	❑
Student has experienced repeated failure at school, difficulty keeping up or difficulty completing homework.	❑	❑	❑
Student has experienced a significant number of negative interactions with teachers and/or other adults in the school.	❑	❑	❑
Student–peer relationships are negative or connection is to other peers engaging in high-risk behaviours.	❑	❑	❑
Student has in-care status with a child and family services authority.	❑	❑	❑
Student has repeated a grade.	❑	❑	❑

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TOOL 1: EARLY WARNING CHECKLIST FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The following indicators are congruent with the literature about students who are at risk of leaving school prior to completing their high school diploma. The higher the number of risk factors, or the earlier they appear, the more likely the student may need additional supports to complete his or her high school diploma.

The literature indicates that developing and implementing strategies to mitigate the identified risk factors has significant impact on helping students to successfully complete their high school education and to become successful, caring and contributing members of the community.

Risk Factor	No	Yes	Significant Impact
Student absenteeism from school is higher than the norm.	❑	❑	❑
Student disabilities negatively impact learning/achievement/participation at school.	❑	❑	❑
Student's psychological or mental health problems negatively impact attendance or performance at school.	❑	❑	❑
Student demonstrates behavioural excesses that negatively impact his or her learning or that of other students.	❑	❑	❑
Student belongs to a minority group and has limited English language proficiency in communicating orally and/or in writing.	❑	❑	❑
Student lives in poverty.	❑	❑	❑
Student exhibits dissatisfaction/alienation/low attachment to school.	❑	❑	❑
Student has experienced more than four school moves.	❑	❑	❑
Student is living apart from biological parent(s).	❑	❑	❑
Student has experienced abuse, trauma and/or family dysfunction.	❑	❑	❑
The parent(s) or caregiver(s) have low expectations/low value for educational achievement.	❑	❑	❑
Student has adult responsibilities such as parenting and/or difficulties accessing child care.	❑	❑	❑
Student is exposed to or participating in high-risk behaviours such as substance abuse.	❑	❑	❑
Student has experienced repeated failure at school, difficulty keeping up or difficulty completing homework.	❑	❑	❑
Student has experienced a significant number of negative interactions with teachers and/or other adults in the school.	❑	❑	❑
Student–peer relationships are negative or connection is to other peers engaging in high-risk behaviours.	❑	❑	❑
Student has in-care status with a child and family services authority.	❑	❑	❑
Student has repeated a grade.	❑	❑	❑

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TOOL 2: STUDENT EXIT SURVEY

Date of Survey: _____

Section 1 — For all Students

Student Name: _____

Alberta Education ID Number: _____

Date of Birth: _____

School Name: _____

Demographic Information: _____

Date in which the student exited school: _____

Gender: ❑ Male ❑ Female

Ethnicity: ❑ Canadian First Nations, Métis or Inuit Ancestry

❑ Immigrant/Refugee Country of Origin _____

❑ Canadian ❑ Asian ❑ Black ❑ Caucasian ❑ Hispanic ❑ Other: _____

Special Needs (e.g., disabilities/gifted) Please check those that apply:

❑ Learning disabled

❑ Hearing impaired/deaf

❑ Visually Impaired/blind

❑ Speech or language impairments

❑ Emotional/behavioural impairments

❑ Medical conditions

❑ Other _____

❑ Autism Spectrum Disorder

❑ Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

❑ Multiple disabilities

❑ Acquired Brain Injury

❑ Developmental/cognitive delay

❑ Gifted

Status with which the student exited school:

❑ Graduated with High School Diploma

❑ Received a Certificate of High School Achievement

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Program and special education credential name: _____

❑ Reached the maximum age ❑ Dropped out ❑ No answer

Plans once exiting high school:

❑ Seek employment (full-time)
❑ Seek employment (part-time)
❑ Apprenticeship program
❑ Trainee (full-time)
❑ Attend post-secondary school, training or further education:

___ University ___ College/Technical Institute ___ Other (please specify): _____

❑ Other plans:
❑ No answer

Contact Information after leaving high school:

Family member name: _____

Family home/cell phone: _____

Family e-mail: _____

Family member address: _____

_____

_____

Student home/cell phone: _____

Student e-mail: _____

Student address: _____

_____

_____

_____

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Section 2 — Dropout Survey Questions

1. In thinking about your experiences in school, why do you think students in your community drop out of high school? _____

_____

2. Can you give specific examples about students who have dropped out in the last year and the reasons why you think they dropped out? _____

_____

3. What are your reasons for dropping out of high school?

- ❑ Parental responsibilities
- ❑ Lack of relevant courses
- ❑ Coursework too difficult
- ❑ Offered a job
- ❑ Health issues
- ❑ Mental health issues
- ❑ Unable to meet behavioural expectations in school
- ❑ Unable to meet attendance requirements
- ❑ Not motivated to continue in school
- ❑ Financial hardship
- ❑ Engaged in apprenticeship/trainee program
- ❑ Vocational needs not being met at school
- ❑ Failing courses
- ❑ Other (please specify) _____

4. What actions did your school(s) take to keep students in school and reduce the dropout rates?

_____

5. Were these the right actions or is there something different the school could have done that would have helped to keep you or other students in school? _____

_____

6. What do you think is the biggest challenge to overcome in reducing the number of students who drop out of high school? _____

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7. What steps do you think the school board should take to reduce the number of students who drop out of high school? _____

_____

8. Researchers say that students who drop out of school have a number of things in common. Could you please identify from the list below, any circumstances that fit your life?

Is this true for you?		Life Circumstance
Yes	No	
☐	☐	Difficulty learning or being able to keep up with my school work.
☐	☐	Having mental health conditions like depression or anxiety.
☐	☐	Having health problems that impacted my ability to be successful or participate in activities at school.
☐	☐	Difficulty getting along with other people.
☐	☐	Not having friends at school.
☐	☐	Not having a teacher or adult in the school that cares about me.
☐	☐	Repeating a grade in school.
☐	☐	Skipping school frequently.
☐	☐	Changing schools more than four times.
☐	☐	My parent(s) did not complete high school.
☐	☐	English is my second language.
☐	☐	At home, graduating from high school is not seen as important.
☐	☐	Not living with my biological parents.
☐	☐	Living in a lone-parent family.
☐	☐	Not or rarely participating in school extracurricular activities.
☐	☐	Engaging in behaviours that placed me at risk, e. g. drinking, drugs.
☐	☐	Being bullied or picked on at school.
☐	☐	Other circumstances that impacted your ability to stay in school (please identify):

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7. What steps do you think the school board should take to reduce the number of students who drop out of high school? _____

_____

8. Researchers say that students who drop out of school have a number of things in common. Could you please identify from the list below, any circumstances that fit your life?

Is this true for you?		Life Circumstance
Yes	No	
❑	❑	Difficulty learning or being able to keep up with my school work.
❑	❑	Having mental health conditions like depression or anxiety.
❑	❑	Having health problems that impacted my ability to be successful or participate in activities at school.
❑	❑	Difficulty getting along with other people.
❑	❑	Not having friends at school.
❑	❑	Not having a teacher or adult in the school that cares about me.
❑	❑	Repeating a grade in school.
❑	❑	Skipping school frequently.
❑	❑	Changing schools more than four times.
❑	❑	My parent(s) did not complete high school.
❑	❑	English is my second language.
❑	❑	At home, graduating from high school is not seen as important.
❑	❑	Not living with my biological parents.
❑	❑	Living in a lone-parent family.
❑	❑	Not or rarely participating in school extracurricular activities.
❑	❑	Engaging in behaviours that placed me at risk; e. g, drinking, drugs.
❑	❑	Being bullied or picked on at school.
❑	❑	Other circumstances that impacted your ability to stay in school (please identify):

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TOOL 3: LEADING CHANGE PLANNING GUIDE

1. **Leadership Vision for a Preferred Future:**
    a. Write a descriptor of the end result you are trying to achieve.
    b. What information or data do you need to refine your vision?
    c. Who, where, when and how will you get this information?
    d. Who is likely to support you in achieving this vision? Who might resist making needed changes?
    e. What actions do you need to take to build shared ownership and commitment to achieve this vision?
    f. What instructional leadership will be needed to support achievement of this vision?

2. **Priority Problem to be Solved:**
    What problem do you need to solve to achieve the vision identified above? What change(s) need to be made to realize the vision?
    a. What data do you currently have that help identify the specific problem(s) to be solved or the needed change?
    b. What data do you need to start collecting? What is the most efficient way to collect this data?
    c. In what areas does action need to be taken to solve the problem or create the change?
    d. How will the quality of instruction and student outcomes/achievement be improved through realizing the vision?
    e. Who needs to actively participate in solving the problem and moving forward with needed change?
    f. Who could take on a leadership role in helping to solve the problem, make the change and achieve the vision?

3. **Four C's of Change:** **(see following pages beginning at 101)**

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Four C's of Change

Evidence

- What evidence is there of beliefs, values, expectations and assumptions that are congruent or misaligned with the vision of a preferred future?
- As you move forward in planning and implementing change, what evidence will you need to be able to gauge progress toward specified goals/needed change?
- How will celebrating progress or achieving milestones toward the vision or needed change be accomplished?
- What type of recognition or celebration is meaningful to staff, students, parents, partners and/or the community?

- What be
assumpt
against b
effect th
- What gr
or admir
students
- What ap
the cultu
- What do
stand to
change?
- What ac
percepti
of gains
- Who sha

C

Evidence

- What data is currently available to support the needed change?
- What administrative procedures or current policy or practices impact our ability to make the needed change; e.g., scheduling, class composition, teacher collaborative work time, transitions between grades, assessment practices?

- What ad
policies
against o
- What alt
organizat
to neede

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CULTURE

Barriers

liefs, values, expectations or
ions are currently shared that work
being able to accomplish the vision or
e needed change?
oups hold these beliefs; e.g., teaching
istrative staff, paraprofessional staff,
, parents, partners, others?
proach or actions will help to change
re so the vision can be realized?
groups or individuals perceive they
lose/gain if they make the needed

tions can you take that will minimize
on of losses and maximize perception
f the required change is made?
res or rejects the vision for change?

Supports

- What currently shared beliefs, values, expectations or assumptions build commitment or mobilize action to achieve the vision or make the needed change?
- Who are potential champions or leaders for the needed change?
- What actions do you need to take as a leader to begin to mobilize action to effect the needed change?
- What actions will have the greatest impact in supporting needed change; e.g., through changing the culture?
- How can you utilize the power of peers or colleagues to build momentum for or commitment to change?
- What leadership actions are likely to build shared commitment and ownership of the needed change?

ONDITIONS

Barriers

ministrative practices, procedures,
r practices are incongruent or work
ur ability to make the needed change?
ernative practices could meet
ional needs without becoming barriers
d change?

Supports

- What current administrative practices, procedures, policies or practices support realization of the vision or the needed change?
- What changes will strengthen our ability to make and sustain the needed change?

Four C's of Change

Evidence

- What evidence is available related to effective practice to achieve needed change?
- What strategies could be employed to measure progress toward the vision of a preferred future/needed change?
- Who needs to participate in creating and gathering data to gauge progress toward needed change?
- What data will be gathered to determine the impact of the change on the quality of instruction and/or student achievement?

COMPETENCIES

Barrie

- What knowledge and/or effect the needed change
- Who is likely to resist dev competencies needed or practice to successfully e
- What strategies for profe would have the greatest staff or others to learn ar (e.g., professional learnin to accomplish the change

Evidence

- What data currently identifies achievement, trends, student outcomes or other factors that impact our ability to make the needed change?
- What results do the community, parents, partners, staff and students expect students to achieve?
- What are the community and parental expectations for graduates of the school or jurisdiction?

CONTEXT

Barrie

- Is there a significant diffe a disconnection for stude
- What barriers have been school and community th effect needed change or a

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ers

skills are needed to
e?
veloping the
changing current
ffect change?
ssional development
impact on supporting
nd apply competencies
g communities) needed
e?

Supports

- What competencies do staff, parents, students and partners need to effectively accomplish the needed change or vision of a preferred future?
- What leadership actions will have the greatest impact to ensure new competencies needed to effect change are developed and consistently applied?
- What levers exist that can build consistent application of new practices designed to effect the needed change?

rs

rence in expectations or
nts and groups?
identified between the
at impact our ability to
achieve the vision?

Supports

- What leadership actions will build or strengthen shared expectations, commitment and mobilization of resources to effect the needed change?
- What actions or strategies will increase communication, openness and trust between members of the school community and the community-at-large?

4. **Avoiding Errors Related to Change —** The following information about "avoiding errors related to change" is adapted from Kotter (1996, pp. 4–14).

   How are you doing in avoiding the following errors related to successfully implementing change?

   a. **Allowing complacency**—Have you established a high enough sense of urgency to motivate participants to make needed change? It is not easy to move people out of their comfort zones. To be successful the actions of leaders must reinforce the compelling need for change.
   b. **Failing to foster establishment of a sufficiently powerful enough leadership to guide coalition for change**—Have you ensured the superintendent/board, other senior administrators, head of the parent council, student council (where appropriate), several lead teachers and partners actively support you in making the needed change? To achieve the vision you will want to ensure you have the support, expertise, relationships and credibility needed to successfully implement the needed changes.
   c. **Under-utilizing the power of vision**—Compelling visions have the ability to inspire others to action and to direct, mobilize and align action. Without a well-developed and achievable vision, there is no unifying foundation for initiatives and strategies. A good vision paints a clear picture of a preferred future, one that is easily understood and highly motivating to others.
   d. **Failing to effectively and regularly communicate the vision**—To achieve significant change requires most people to be willing to make short-term sacrifices. People need to believe that the long-term benefits are worth the sacrifice or effort they make. Frequent and credible communication, provided through words as well as deeds, is critical to successful change efforts.
   e. **Allowing roadblocks to stop or impair change**—Leaders must positively confront roadblocks to change when they occur, despite whether the blockers are organizational structure problems or individual actions.
   f. **Not creating short-term wins**—Change takes time. Change within complex organizations such as schools or school jurisdictions takes significant time and there is a risk that members of the school community will not maintain their commitment to change without short-term accomplishments, which celebrate and provide compelling evidence that the change is producing positive results.
   g. **Declaring successful achievement of the vision or change too soon**—It is important to allow time for changes to be well-established, as part of the culture, prior to declaring success or motivation to continue these changes. Also, evidence that the changes have become part of daily practice is needed prior to declaring successful achievement of the vision.
   h. **Failing to anchor changes firmly as part of the organizational culture**—The key indicator that change has been firmly established is evident when it becomes the "way we do things around here." This means leaders need to make overt the connection between specific behaviours and beliefs and their impact on improved outcomes. New leaders need to become entrenched in these beliefs and practices to ensure sustained change over time.

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TOOL 4: INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP STAFF SURVEY

As part of my learning and development as a school principal, I am requesting that you complete this survey. Please place your responses in a sealed envelope and give them to (name of individual) _____ for compilation by (date) _____. I will not receive individual responses but will receive a synopsis of the survey results. Your time and effort to complete this survey is greatly appreciated.

Please respond to the following statements by indicating whether you (1) strongly agree; (2) agree; (3) disagree; (4) strongly disagree; or (5) are unsure.

Components of Instructional Leadership	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Disagree	4 Strongly Disagree	5 Unsure or Don't Know
The principal engages regularly in discussions with staff that are related to student achievement and instructional practice.					
The principal frequently visits classrooms to observe the instructional process in action.					
The principal provides timely feedback to me as a teacher to assist me in improving my instructional practice following classroom observations.					
I feel confident in asking the principal for advice or direction when I am facing instructional challenges or problems.					
Other staff feel confident in asking the principal for advice or direction when they are facing instructional challenges or problems.					
The principal assists staff in analyzing results from provincial achievement tests or diploma examinations.					
I view the principal as an important resource for instructional leadership.					
Other staff views the principal as an important resource for instructional leadership.					
The principal is a strong advocate for professional development.					
The principal clearly communicates instructional goals.					
The principal makes it a practice to be a visible presence in the school to students, staff and parents.					
The principal allocates resources to support improved instructional practice and student achievement.					
The principal promotes and supports staff teams focused on improving student achievement.					
My instructional practice has improved based on interactions with the principal.					
The principal understands and advocates that we accommodate student diversity as part of our instructional process.					

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TOOL 4: INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP STAFF SURVEY

As part of my learning and development as a school principal, I am requesting that you complete this survey. Please place your responses in a sealed envelope and give them to (name of individual) _____ for compilation by (date) _____. I will not receive individual responses but will receive a synopsis of the survey results. Your time and effort to complete this survey is greatly appreciated.

Please respond to the following statements by indicating whether you (1) strongly agree; (2) agree; (3) disagree; (4) strongly disagree; or (5) are unsure.

Components of Instructional Leadership	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Disagree	4 Strongly Disagree	5 Unsure or Don't Know
The principal engages regularly in discussions with staff that are related to student achievement and instructional practice.					
The principal frequently visits classrooms to observe the instructional process in action.					
The principal provides timely feedback to me as a teacher to assist me in improving my instructional practice following classroom observations.					
I feel confident in asking the principal for advice or direction when I am facing instructional challenges or problems.					
Other staff feel confident in asking the principal for advice or direction when they are facing instructional challenges or problems.					
The principal assists staff in analyzing results from provincial achievement tests or diploma examinations.					
I view the principal as an important resource for instructional leadership.					
Other staff views the principal as an important resource for instructional leadership.					
The principal is a strong advocate for professional development.					
The principal clearly communicates instructional goals.					
The principal makes it a practice to be a visible presence in the school to students, staff and parents.					
The principal allocates resources to support improved instructional practice and student achievement.					
The principal promotes and supports staff teams focused on improving student achievement.					
My instructional practice has improved based on interactions with the principal.					
The principal understands and advocates that we accommodate student diversity as part of our instructional process.					

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Components of Instructional Leadership	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Disagree	4 Strongly Disagree	5 Unsure or Don't Know
The principal is clear and knowledgeable about the Teaching Quality Standard in Alberta.					
The principal frequently encourages students to excel at their studies and to engage in the learning process.					
The principal engages parents, through information sharing and dialogue or school-initiated activities, to be active partners in supporting students to be successful learners.					
The principal creates opportunities for distributed leadership related to improved instructional practice within the school.					
The principal promotes staff in creating innovative instructional strategies to meet student learning needs.					
The principal uses data/evidence to identify areas of strength and areas where improvement is needed to increase student achievement and engagement.					
The principal ensures systematic monitoring of student progress.					
The principal protects staff from external pressures that take away from their focus on instructional practice and student achievement.					

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TOOL 5: EFFECTIVE TRANSITIONS CHECKLIST

Please indicate with a check mark whether the statements below indicate actions taken.

Indicator	In Place (✓)
Planning Process	
• There is a written plan for the transition process.	
• Timelines for the transition procedures are included in the plan.	
• Lead people to complete transition actions are identified in the transition plan.	
• Transition plans are based on identified and assessed needs and strengths of the child/youth.	
• The family is an integral part of transition planning and implementation.	
• Child/youth voice and issues are included in the transition plan.	
• Competencies needed by receiving staff are identified and training is provided, as required, to support successful transitions.	
• Communication strategies that include all team members, as well as the family, are identified within the transition plan.	
• Cultural elements are included in the plan, as appropriate, to ensure the family, community and cultural aspects of transition are appropriately addressed.	
• Sufficient resources (material and fiscal) have been provided to successfully complete the planned transition.	
• The transition plan is flexible enough to accommodate emergent needs or resolve emergent issues that arise during the transition process.	
Family Engagement Process	
• Families are provided with written information related to school or jurisdiction transition policies and practices.	
• The family's perception of their child/youth's transition needs is incorporated into the transition plan.	
• The child/youth has a voice in identifying transition needs when he or she is able to participate and his or her issues and needs are incorporated into the plan.	
• Families have the opportunity to specify their preferred type and amount of participation in the transition process.	
• Active participation of the child/youth and his or her family is a formal transition goal.	
• The family is knowledgeable about how and to whom information will be shared.	
• The child/youth and family has the opportunity to participate in exchange visits with the receiving school.	

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Indicator	In Place (✓)
Coordination Process	
• Cross-sector teams have written interagency agreements that outline shared and organizational responsibilities for information sharing when transitioning involves more than one service provider or sector.	
• Transition procedures are inclusive and involve active participation by all members of the transition team.	
• All members of the transition team understand who needs to be involved in planning and supporting throughout the transition and who is responsible for each transition procedure or activity.	
• All members of the transition team share information and communicate openly to support successful transitioning.	
• Sending and receiving school staff has the opportunity to ask questions, share information and participate in exchange program visits prior to, during and subsequent to the actual transition.	
• Transition team members agree that participation, as part of this transition team, has strengthened relationships and willingness to work together to support effective transitions.	
Evaluating Results Process	
• Formal methods for evaluating the success of the transition are identified, implemented and analyzed to identify effective practices.	
• Child/youth, family and partner/team perspectives, including those from the sending and receiving schools regarding the effectiveness of the transition planning and implementation process are used as part of the evaluation process to identify lessons learned and promising practices.	
• Partnering agreements or protocols are reviewed annually and revised, as needed.	
• Areas for improvement and effective practices are identified and shared with team members as part of continuous improvement.	

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TOOL 6: SCHOOL–COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PERCEPTION CHECK

Establishing and strengthening school–community partnerships takes time and commitment to collaborative processes. This checklist will provide data that can be used to enhance current partnerships and identify areas for growth as part of continuous improvement.

Please respond to each of the statements below by using a 5-point rating scale.

Dimension	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Disagree	4 Strongly Disagree	5 Unsure or Don't Know
Our partnership has a clear vision.					
Our partnership has identified specific goals and outcomes that we are committed to achieving.					
Our partnership has developed a collaborative structure and all members understand and accept their roles and responsibilities.					
Our partnership is comprised of cross-sector or cross-service disciplines from a range of organizations that support children and youth within the community.					
Our partnership has developed and implemented coordinated strategies to connect services and increase access to these services for the children, youth and families we collectively serve.					
All partners know who the other partners are and what services they provide through their organizations.					
Our partnership has developed effective two-way communication strategies that effectively keep all partners informed of our progress and emereent issues needing resolution.					
Our partnership actively engages in activities that promote the partnership and celebrate accomplishments and progress.					
Our partnership has contributed to accessing resources (financial and other) from partner organizations and others in the community.					
Our partnership has established joint accountability for delivering outcomes agreed to by members.					
Leaders in member organizations actively support and promote the work of the partnership within their organization and the community.					
All partners see the school as an integral part of the community.					
Our partnership works actively to eliminate barriers between the school and community.					

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TOOL 7: CHECKLIST FOR DEVELOPING AN ABORIGINAL MENTORING PROGRAM

1. Do the goals and objectives for your program include:
   - ❍ An assessment of your community's needs for a mentoring program?
   - ❍ The what, why, how and who of your mentoring program?
   - ❍ Input from Elders, community members and potential volunteers?
   - ❍ A realistic, attainable and easy-to-understand plan for mentoring?
   - ❍ Goals, objectives and timelines for all aspects of mentoring?
   - ❍ A plan for fundraising and developing resources?
   - ❍ A focus for mentors and youth?
2. Does your recruitment plan for mentors and youth include:
   - ❍ Strategies to identify potential mentors in your community?
   - ❍ Ways to involve Elders and community members in securing volunteers?
   - ❍ Asking parents, schools and social service agencies to refer youth?
   - ❍ A description of eligibility, screening process and suitability requirements?
   - ❍ Involving families and community members in the program?
   - ❍ Expected time commitment from volunteers and youth?
   - ❍ Benefits and rewards they can expect from mentoring?
3. Does your screening procedure for mentors include:
   - ❍ An application process and review?
   - ❍ Criminal records check from the local RCMP or police detachment?
   - ❍ A face-to-face interview and home visit, if youth will be in the home?
   - ❍ A character reference check?
   - ❍ A driving record check, if the mentor will be transporting youth?
   - ❍ A discussion about the motivation for volunteering to mentor?
   - ❍ Successful completion of training and orientation?
4. Have you planned an orientation for mentors and youth that includes:
   - ❍ An overview of your mentoring program?
   - ❍ Orientation of the program?
   - ❍ Expectations and restrictions?
   - ❍ How to get the most out of the mentoring relationship?
   - ❍ Mentor's role and role descriptions?
   - ❍ Program policies regarding contact with youth and families?
   - ❍ Cultural sensitivity and appreciation training?
   - ❍ Do's and don'ts of relationship management?
   - ❍ Confidentiality and liability information?
   - ❍ Crisis management/problem-solving resources?
   - ❍ Communications skills development?
   - ❍ Ongoing training?
5. Have you developed a strategy for matching volunteers and youth that:
   - ❍ Links with the program's statement of purpose?
   - ❍ Encourages a commitment?
   - ❍ Considers gender, age, availability, life experience and temperament?
   - ❍ Includes signed agreement by mentor and youth to the mentoring?
   - ❍ Obtains agreement of youth's parent or guardian to the match?

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6. How will you monitor your program to ensure:
   - ❍ Consistent, regularly scheduled meetings with staff, mentors and youth?
   - ❍ The program has ongoing assessment in place?
   - ❍ Written records are maintained? (including appropriate insurance)
   - ❍ Regular input from Elders, family and significant others?
   - ❍ Procedures are in place to manage grievances, praise and problems?
7. Have you developed plans for support, recognition and retention that include:
   - ❍ A formal kick-off event?
   - ❍ Ongoing support for volunteer mentors, participants and others, and ways to disseminate information?
   - ❍ Regular communication with mentors, supporters and funders?
   - ❍ Ongoing training and development for mentors including opportunities to discuss relevant issues and networking and social gatherings with different groups or organizations, as needed?
   - ❍ Annual recognition and appreciation events?
8. Have you thought about how to handle mentoring relationships that end including confidential exit interviews to debrief:
   - ❍ Youth, mentors and staff?
   - ❍ About policies for any future contact between the mentor and youth?
9. How will you:
   - ❍ Analyze your program and relationships?
   - ❍ Evaluate program criteria and purpose?
   - ❍ Assess the needs of Elders, mentors, youth, community partners and program supporters?

Government of Alberta's *Handbook for Aboriginal Mentoring* (2007, pp. 14–15).

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TOOL 8: STUDENT ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

Student Name: _____ **School:** _____

Date: _____ **Grade:** _____ **Subject:** _____

Please respond by putting a check mark in the box that best describes your point-of-view.

Point of View	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Disagree	4 Strongly Disagree	5 Unsure or Don't Know
I participate more actively in classroom activities that show a clear connection to my life or the real world.					
I participate more actively in classroom activities that give me choices in how I show what I have learned.					
I participate more actively when I am encouraged to set goals for myself.					
I participate more actively when I have the chance to talk to the teacher one-on-one.					
I feel there is at least one teacher in the school who cares about me and how well I am doing in school.					
I feel the work is too hard for me in this class.					
I feel the work is too easy for me in this class.					
I have a voice in classroom decisions that affect me.					
I have a voice in school decisions that affect me.					
I care about how well I do in school.					
My family cares about how well I do in school.					
I attend school regularly.					
I attend all my classes regularly.					
I take pride in the quality of my school work.					
Good grades matter to me.					
I have the ability to complete the assignments I get in school.					
I try hard to get good grades.					
In class, I try to make sense of what I learn by linking it to what I already know.					
I participate in school activities outside of class like sports teams, clubs or special projects.					
I can work on projects or activities that interest me in class.					
I feel valued and respected in my class.					
I feel valued and respected in my school.					
I feel valued and respected by my classmates.					

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Tips for teachers to help me do well in school:

Please do:

Please don't:

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X. High School Completion Strategic Framework

Strategy	Desired Outcome
Personalized Learning	• Students receive responsive learning approaches tailored to their individual abilities and interests.
Successful Transitions	• Students have the supports and programs to help them make a successful transition between grades and from school-to-work.
Collaborative Partnerships	• Students and their families receive integrated support services delivered through wraparound approaches.
Positive Connections	• Students' sense of belonging within the education system is reflected in regular attendance and strong motivation to learn.
Tracking Progress	• High school completion strategies and targets are based on comprehensive tracking, data and results, and diagnostic use of information.

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XI. AISI: Examples of High School Completio

Information retrieved from the AISI Clearinghouse Web Site (April 2

				Battle River Regiona
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
1	10352 Learning Success: Failure Is Not An Option	600 Students/ Grades 1 to 12	20	More students will ex developmental assets and allowing for addit achievement, higher c English, and improved
2	10503 Evolving Approaches to Staff Development	7500 Students/ Grades K to 12	37	Establish a profession and caring, meeting th workplace.
3	30175 Building Pyramids of Success	400 Students/ Grades 1 to 12	20	Develop teacher capa provide effective supp
				Black Gold Regiona
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope(# schools)*	*Project Description*
4	10116 Every Student: A Winner	7900 Students/ Grades K to 12	24	Provide differentiated
5	30093 Instructional Practices Addressing Student Diversity	2692 Students/ Grades 7 to 12	6	Involve teachers in co among students and t advocacy for individua
				Buffalo Trail Public Schools
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope(# schools)*	*Project Description*
6	30352 Connecting to the World-of-Work	334 Students/ Grades 10 to 12	16	Offer optional courses interests and learning counselling programs improvement.

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n Projects

009).

l Division No. 31
perience greater success by focusing on differentiated instructional strategies, building , increasing relevant academic learning time, offering alternative learning opportunities, ional staff in participating schools. This will be reflected in improved academic course completion rates, improved self-esteem, higher participation rates in senior high l high school completion rates.
al learning community to build teacher capacity, focusing on making schools more safe he needs of exceptional students, and integrating technology into the classroom and
city to assess student need in the areas of academics, character and community, and to orts for the diverse needs of students at all levels of learning and engagement.
l Division No. 18
instruction to better meet the needs of all students.
llaborative studies to find ways to increase cooperative and collaborative learning eachers, and to increase student metacognition of learning styles and student self- l learning needs.
Regional Division No. 28
that improve student connection to the world-of-work, better accommodate student styles, and improve student access to and satisfaction with off-campus offerings and such as "Career Cruising"; utilize videoconferencing as a strategy in high school

	Calgary Roman			
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope(# schools)*	*Project Des*
7	10398 Career Pathways	10000 Students/ Grades 8 to 12	10	Assist stu they leav recogniz
8	10402 Distributed Learning	9353 Students/ Grades 10 to 12	10	Utilize w explanat learning
9	10433 Healthy and Caring Schools	Grades K to 12	97	Support and the
10	30529 Off-Campus Student Success for At-Risk Students	100 Students/ Grades 10 to 12	12	Provide connecte develop them to
				Cal
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project De*
11	10222 Strategic Skills for Success	300 Students/ Grades 7 to 12	10	"Strateg school b numerac of them learning
12	10502 Career Pathways: Centre West Schools	4600 Students/ Grades 10 to 12	8	Facilitat resource promote
13	30271 Partnerships that Impact Student Learning	10000 Students/ Grades 7 to 12	27	Align pa commu child an
14	30273 21st Century Learning Environments	39000 Students/ Grades K to 12	90	Build a that cha embedd

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Catholic Separate School District No. 1
scription
udents in developing career maturity and direction by ensuring students have a career plan before ve high school, can use labour market information to help them in their career plans, and are able to e all alternatives in post-secondary education and career opportunities.
veb technologies to differentiate student learning in curricular areas by providing interactive and tory resources in classroom settings. This provides learners with more flexibility and control over their experience.
learning communities to improve the overall school climate by focusing on value-based education health and well-being of the school community.
opportunities for early leavers to work in Off-Campus Work Experience or RAP, allowing them to stay ed to the school district. Work is done with a career practitioner and district off-campus teachers to a career plan to bring these students back into their home school or some other situation that allows complete high school.
gary School District No. 19
scription
ic Skills for Success" aims to address the needs of students who are identified as high risk of leaving efore high school completion. Students will be linked to school through identifying literacy and cy challenges and by assisting the student in building strategies and skills to improve understandings selves, improve belief in their ability to be successful, and develop basic skills that can improve their and enhance their chances for high school completion.
e the transition of career pathways in the high schools through enhancing the utilization of existing s and programs, and providing a broad range of programming possibilities for high school students to the seamless transitions from secondary schools to post-secondary experiences.
tnership work with student achievement and build staff capacity by utilizing the support of ity agencies, businesses, associations, other education authorities, regional health authorities and family services authorities.
ommon understanding and framework for K–12 that provides multiple entry points for initiatives mpion personalizing learning, learner pathways, information and digital literacy, and allow for job-ed leadership development.

				Calga
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project*
15	746 Radio and Television Broadcasting	20 Students/ Grades 10 to 12	1	Local
				Calvin Christian School
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project*
16	30479 High School Completion	218 Students/ Grades 9 to 12	1	Provi Distar flexib respo enviro
				Canadia
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project*
17	30166 Building on Student Learning	2300 Students Grades K to 12	7	Allow progra skills, with t
				Chino
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project*
18	10178 Inquiry-based Learning	300 Students/ Grades 9 to 12	1	Create studie
19	10365 Alternative Programming	165 Students Grades 4 to 12	4	Establi studer achiev
20	30125 Using Assessment to Support Student Learning	10600 Students/ Grades K to 12	36	Impact summ Involv peer a

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ry Society for Christian Education
Description
development of a course on "Critical Thinking in Media."
Society of the Netherlands Reformed Congregations
Description
de students with opportunities to enroll in RAP, Green Certificate, Work Experience programs and nce Education courses; expand Industrial Arts offerings to meet their interests and career goals; provide le scheduling/programming through a four-day school week; empower at-risk students by making them nsible for their own attendance, behaviour and success, and provide a caring and supportive onment.
an Rockies Regional Division No. 12
Description
for teacher collaboration and further development of professional learning communities to develop ms to ensure effective transitions for students. Elementary schools will focus on developing literacy common assessment and reporting; middle schools will address writing and assessment in conjunction he receiving high school; and high schools will focus on developing a positive school culture.
ook's Edge School Division No. 73
Description
and implement inquiry-based learning tasks incorporating technology in English language arts, social s, mathematics and science to improve student learning.
sh a setting for the guided completion of distance education programs, the assistance of at-risk ts and the accommodation for students who have missed portions of coursework to improve student ement.
the culture of teaching and learning with a focus on formative (Assessment for Learning) and at ve (Assessment of Learning) strategies through the lead teacher model of professional development. e students in the assessment process through the use of exemplars, identification of key outcomes, nd self-assessment, goal setting, feedback and questioning strategies.

				Christ the Redeem
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project De*
21	30214 Using VC to Improve HS Completion and Program Access	80 Students/ Grades 10 to 12	6	Meet th and pro remotel videoco
22	30215 Pyramid of Interventions	650 Students / Grades 10 to 12	1	Researc collabor failure a
23	30216 Character Education	120 Students/ Grades 10 to 12	1	Apply th charact Commu entire sc
				East Central Alberta Cat
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project De*
24	618 Career Education and Career Counselling	60 Students/ Grades 10 to 12	1	Enhance career c
				East Central F
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project De*
25	502 CASA, le plan Copernic et les moniteurs	85 Students/ Grades 9 to 12	3	Provide
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project De*
26	10518 Motivating for Success	7 Students/ Grades 8 to 9	1	Provide organiza class

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er Catholic Separate Regional Division No. 3

ription

e needs of individual learners, expand learning opportunities for students attending small schools, vide equal opportunities for students in rural areas through the use of collaboration with other distributed students, community experts, distributed learning resources and a fully interactive nference learning environment.

h and receive professional development on the concept of Professional Learning Communities to atively establish a school-wide "Pyramid of Interventions" that will be enacted proactively to prevent nd reactively when encountering failure.

e concept of performance character as the pathway to both excellence and ethics and to develop e diligence, a strong work ethic, a positive attitude and perseverance. Create a Professional Learning nity committed to 'an ethic of excellence' using a team of teachers working in collaboration with the aff.

tholic Separate Schools Regional Division No. 16

ription

career education through a concentrated focus on career education elements and expansion of ounselling for high school students.

Francophone Education Region No. 3

ription

ndividualized instruction for students who have difficulty with learning.

Edison School Society

ription

a teacher with counselling experience to oversee/tutor students who display a lack of motivation and tion in their academic work. Academic tutoring and counselling will be available for these students as

Edmonton Catholic Separate School District No. 7				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
27	10377 High School Completion Rates	550 Students/ Grades 10 to 12	11	Implement a partnership/mentorship program where teachers assist at-risk students in developing a school completion plan, monitor progress, act as a liaison with instructors providing coursework and instruction, and ensure students have clear direction toward transition from the three-year high school program.
28	30056 Students in Transition Supports	25500 Students/ Grades 8 to 12	27	Identify specific target groups and strategies for the junior high level in terms of transition planning to high school, and outline strategies for fourth- and fifth-year completion rates.
29	30057 ESL Access to Academic English	1500 Students/ Grades 5 to 12	25	Support students with strategic social, linguistic and cultural approaches to fulfill their academic potential and assist teachers to be better prepared to meet the complex diverse needs of these language learners through informed and directed instructional planning, effective supports and increased cultural competency.
Edmonton School District No. 7				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Student../Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
30	30087 Learning with Technologies	2600 Students/ Grades K to 12	12	Explore the use of technologies to support and enhance learning across all grades and subject areas, and engage students in authentic, complex tasks to develop higher order skills such as critical thinking, analysis and scientific inquiry.
31	30096 Using Assessment to Enhance Student Learning	25075 Students Grades K to 12	70	Explore the application of sound assessment principles and practices across all grade levels and subject areas and the involvement of students in the process of assessment to improve student engagement and motivation to learn.
32	30097 Engaging all Learners Through Differentiated Instruction	39700 Students/ Grades K to 12	88	Motivate and engage all students in their learning through the implementation of research-based practices and strategies for differentiation and assessment using collaborative inquiry to build expertise, sustain change in teacher practice, monitor student learning and communicate effectively within the area of differentiated instruction.
33	30098 Deepening Literacy Instruction	9600 Students/ Grades K to 9	36	Enhance the literacy of all students and target extra support to students who are struggling with literacy skills at the elementary and junior high levels by developing school-level literacy leaders and being more intentional about using research-based strategies to address student strengths and needs.
34	30150 Community Collaboration	7079 Students/ Grades pre-K to 9	30	Develop an interdisciplinary collaborative service plan to address the complex needs and issues that at-risk children and their families face. Also provide for parent in-servicing, professional development and collaborative opportunities for teachers to continue to deepen their understanding of balanced literacy and early childhood best practices.
Elk Island Catholic Separate Regional Division No. 41				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
35	10058 Facilitating Learning through Student Centres	5600 Students/ Grades K to 12	16	Utilize a "Student Centre" at each school where differentiated learning with various learner groups can occur and where students may seek guidance and counselling advice.

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Evergreen Catholic Separate Regional Division No. 2				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
36	611 Enhancing Effectiveness Integrated Services	2189 Students/ Grades K to 12	5	Provide special projects at five schools that include reducing class size, providing early intervention strategies, delivering a special adaptation program and providing career counselling.
37	10088 Academic Improvement School Initiative	29 Students/ Grades 7 to 12	1	Develop and offer flexible and innovative structured curricular programming that aligns with the Alberta Education special needs curricular standards, in order to optimally accommodate the learning needs of students identified with special needs. This includes adjusting the content, pace and instruction for students identified with learning disabilities and restructuring the core subjects into a series of individualized academic and life skills courses/modules for students with major academic challenges that would be implemented through Individualized Program Plans.
38	10389 Literacy and Numeracy for all Learners	553 Students/ Grades 1 to 8	4	Establish Professional Learning Communities to build teacher capacity focusing on school improvement in the areas of literacy and numeracy targeting the needs of all students with an emphasis on students with special needs (including gifted or talented).
39	10392 Communities of Caring in Early Transition to High School	158 Students Grades 8 to 12	1	Reorganize grade structure in schools from grades 10 to 12 to grades 9 to 12. Design programs and services that will help students develop a four-year seamless program to ensure better streaming, course selection, continuity, career planning and completion rate.
40	30004 Optimizing Student Learning – ELA and Math(OSLEM)	40 Students/ Grades 5 to 6	1	Use assessment for learning and differentiated instructional strategies to provide intervention to students who are experiencing difficulty with core subject material, generally, and particularly Math and English Language Arts.
41	30266 Broadening Opportunities for Student Leadership	95 Students/ Grades 9 to 12	1	Implement a "partnership/mentorship" program where teachers assist students who are new or "at-risk" of non-completion, and a "senior student leadership" program that allows students to work with teachers in a hands-on way to mentor students of all abilities in grades 9 to 12.
Foothills School Division No. 38				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
42	30240 Igniting the Power of Learning	6530 Students/ Grades K to 12	22	Provide opportunities for educators to work in Professional Learning Communities to use data to assess student learning needs; design improvement strategies based on clearly stated outcomes for teacher and student learning; gain a deeper understanding of the subjects they teach; explore and learn about research-based instructional strategies; and collaborate on effective instructional and assessment strategies and plan for well-coordinated learning activities for staff and students.

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Fort McMurray Roman Catholic Separate School District No. 32				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
43	30401 Improving Student Core Subject Competencies	3000 Students/ Grades 4 to 12	9	Enhance teacher curriculum delivery methods and student assessment practices through curriculum alignment and instructional coaching. District personnel will be designated to observe, monitor, support, inform and alter curriculum awareness, understanding and delivery practices among teachers.
Fort Vermilion School Division No. 52				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
44	30250 Success Through Iinprovement in Reading	3500 Students/ Grades K to 12	19	Utilize the support of a director of literacy and a reading specialist to develop a strong culture of literacy in schools, to conduct research into effective programs and approaches that impact student reading abilities, and to work with parents in the area of developing children's pre-reading and actual reading skills within a language-rich environment at home.
45	30267 Successful Students via High School Completion	3500 Students/ Grades 4 to 12	19	Employ a director of school completion to provide ongoing direction, mentorship, professional development and support for young administrators and to conduct research into the factors which affect each individual school's transition and completion rates, and approaches and strategies to impact grade and school transition rates, dropout rates and high school completion rates.
Grande Prairie Roman Catholic Separate School District No. 28				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
46	30042 Assessment for Learning	919 Students/ Grades 9 to 12	2	Enable teachers to develop an understanding and application of the purposes of assessment, align assessment with intended learning outcomes, use a variety of assessment tools/strategies, provide quality feedback to students on their learning, use all forms of assessment to inform instructional decisions, and move students toward metacognition.
Grande Yellowhead Regional Division No. 35				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
47	241 Eagle (expanded school day)	120 Students/ Grades 10 to 12	1	Provide an in-house learning centre, staffed by a teacher aide, to give students before and after school access to library and computer resources.
48	10082 A Gift of Time: Kindergarten Enhancement Project	380 Students/ Grade K	11	Provide extensive professional development to acquire research-based best practices to improve the quality of instruction to Kindergarten students. Offer an extended Kindergarten program for a small number of students who could most benefit from additional instruction. A reduced number of students will allow teachers the time to implement new strategies and internalize them so they become part of the core instructional practices, which will then be transferred and applied in the regular Kindergarten program.
49	10119 Improving Math Achievement Through Collaboration	5600 Students/ Grades K to 12	17	Foster professional collaborative cultures that focus on excellence in student achievement, particularity in the area of mathematics.

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Grasslands Regional Division No. 6				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
50	10358 Comprehensive Portfolio System to Enhance a Career	580 Students/ Grades 9 to 12	2	Implement a Comprehensive Portfolio System including records of individual student accomplishments, experiences, self-evaluations, career research and educational or career plans over a three-year implementation phase to enhance the Career Development Program.
51	30081 Focus on Learning, Achievement and Citizenship	3870 Students/ Grades pre-K to 12	20	Continue to develop a collaborative culture where teachers share best practices, learn from each other, and engage in more intense research and development in identified priority areas.
52	30120 Improving Student Safety and Citizenship	1000 Students Grades 7 to 12	3	Promote character development in schools and hire a school resource officer whose primary responsibility will be to work with the students and staff, and act as a liaison between schools and agencies within the city.
Greater St. Albert Catholic Regional Division No. 29				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
53	6442 Supporting the Online Learner	296 Students/ Grades 4 to 1	1	Establish a Professional Learning Community to access current educational research and establish more effective structures to support online learners.
54	30278 Unleashing Student Potential Through Assessment	6266 Students/ Grades K to 12	18	Focus on literacy in the content areas and critical thinking using assessment for learning as the underlying theme. Build capacity amongst teachers to develop enhanced assessment for learning strategies in the areas of literacy and numeracy. Explore factors that negatively influence high school completion and provide effective supports and interventions that will lead to increased high school completion rates.
High Prairie School Division No. 48				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
55	30309 Diverse and Collaborative Assessment	3600 Students/ Grades K to 12	12	Increase teacher knowledge and application of classroom assessment practices, most particularly assessment for learning, and involve students in the assessment process. Include professional development for administrators in assessment and leadership and explore ways to deliver professional development and to allow for teacher collaboration at the school and divisional levels.
Holy Family Catholic Regional Division No. 37				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
56	30218 Students and Teachers: Making Assessment Real	2142 Students/ Grades K to 12	9	Focus on formative assessment, involving students in their own assessment, and provide staff time to work in their Professional Learning Communities at the school level in order to identify essential learning outcomes in the core subjects, plan differentiated units together and create assessment tools and plans that work for them.

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Holy Spirit Roman Catholic Separate Regional Division No. 4				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
57	10198 Project IDEA: Instructional Diversity: Educational Advancement	750 Students/ Grades 10 to 12	1	Provide professional development to build teacher capacity focusing on differentiated instructional practices, subject-specific vocabulary, and mentoring students requiring emotional and/or psychological wellness support.
Horizon School Division No. 67				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
58	10013 Building Learning Communities	3570 Students/ Grades K to 12	30	Establish Professional Learning Communities to build teacher capacity focusing on instructional and assessment strategies and planning to provide timely student intervention programs.
59	30085 Brain-based Instruction to Increase Learning	3389 Students/ Grades K to 12	33	Implement brain-based learning, differentiated instruction and assessment strategies to meet the diverse learning needs of all K–12 students and provide related staff professional development that focuses on high student achievement.
Lethbridge School District No. 51				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
60	10012 SAIL (Supporting Achievement and Improving Learning)	236 Students/ Grades 9 to 12	2	Provide support in the four core subject areas to students identified with learning disabilities. Identified students will receive extra help in a designated room outside of the regular classroom with a teacher/teacher assistant. The regular classroom teacher will be provided with assistance in the implementation of Individualized Program Plans.
61	10014 Watson Stay-in-School Project	50 Students/ Grades 9 to 12	1	Implement the "Allan Watson Stay-In-School Project" to students who have severe attendance, behavioural, academic or scheduling problems and are at risk of not completing high school. Resources and learning packages will be developed that will enable the students to study independently, either at school in a special room or at home. The curriculum will focus on below average students and use the Integrated Occupational curriculum as a base. The intent of the project will be to keep students linked to a school program with hopes that some of the students will actually re-enter a more traditional classroom setting.
62	30044 Alternative Learning Program	350 Students/ Grades 10 to 12	2	Provide alternative programming to high school students and create a supportive, caring environment where there is an interest in students' lives by personalizing instruction, tracking progress and ensuring success.
63	30066 Creating Literacy and Student Success (CLASS)	100 Students/ Grade 10	1	Focus on literacy and continuing education as the basis for Creating Literacy and Student Success (CLASS) and provide students with an advisor, an Individual Learning Plan, and access to one-on-one and small group instruction in a flexible timetable within a nontraditional environment.
64	30078 Watson Literacy Support	35 Students/ Grades 9 to 10	1	Employ a literacy intervention specialist to provide one-on-one or small group instructional support, in a designated room outside of the regular classroom, to identified Grade 9 or Grade 10 students who struggle with the new Knowledge and Employability curriculum.

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65	32376 Whatever It Takes	750 Students/ Grades 6 to 8	2	Provide extra supports in the form of developmentally appropriate teaching strategies in the classroom and a resource centre for students who are struggling academically in middle schools.
Living Waters Catholic Regional Division No. 42				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
66	10089 Student Gains Through Student Leadership	433 Students/ Grades 4 to 12	1	Develop a student leadership framework for students to take on leadership training and concomitant roles and responsibilities including involvement in student-led school and co-curricular activities.
67	10090 Let's R.A.P. (Read Another Page)	81 Students/ Kindergarten	1	Implement "Love of Reading" sessions with all Kindergarten students through a specialized 0.3 FTE lead teacher using appropriate instructional strategies including the Accelerated Reading Program and a strong vocabulary and sound development supplement. A home reading component will be utilized and training wil be provided to parents.
68	10091 Balanced Literacy	122 Students/ Grades 1 to 3	1	Provide a balanced literacy program including individual, paired and/or group reading using student choice with "levelled" reading materials and specialized teacher support, assistance and/or instruction. Provide small group of students with four specific types of reading and writing instruction and learning including (a) direct instruction, (b) planning, (c) modelling, and (d) practicing. Project-based homeroom learning will be used for the core subjects.
69	10092 Writing Literacy	322 Students/ Grades 1 to 6	1	Utilize a highly structured writing program such as the "Joanne Moore Writing With Results" program, the "Betty Weibe Writing program", the "First Steps Structured Writing" program or other appropriate writing program package. Integration of writing across the curriculum and throughout various learning activities.
70	13711 Academic Improvement School Initiative	29 Students/ Grades 7 to 12	1	Develop and offer flexible and innovative structured curricular programming that aligns with the Alberta Education special needs curricular standards, in order to optimally accommodate the learning needs of students identified with special needs. This includes adjusting the content, pace and instruction for students identified with learning disabilities and restructuring the core subjects into a series of individualized academic and life skills courses/modules for students with major academic challenges, which would be implemented through Individualized Program Plans.
71	30011 Improving Reading for Division I Students	450 Students/ Grades 1 to 3	1	Use Guided Reading as a basic model for instruction and a variety of Division I techniques that will be determined as a result of conducting various student assessments to identify learning strategies.
72	30012 Junior High Math Improvement	540 Students/ Grades 7 to 9	1	Apply various assessments for learning and develop various differentiated instructional strategies to accommodate student math learning styles and needs including "enrichment" activities for advanced students and "remedial" activities and tutoring for students needing extra skill and knowledge development.
73	30014 (MI)2: Math Improvement and Multiple Intelligences	573 Students/ Grades 7 to 12	1	Utilize assessment for learning (A4L) techniques to assess student math needs and styles and design differentiated instructional strategies that are engaging, meaningful, and perceived as valuable and authentic to accommodate student math needs and preferences.

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Medicine Hat Catholic Separate Regional Division No. 20				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
74	10394 Career and Technology	500 Students/ Grades 9 to 12	2	Develop and implement programs that meet student's educational goals through practical skills training focusing on the addition and strengthening of CTS programming.
75	10396 Virtual Education	2600 Students/ Grades 4 to 12	11	Build a partnership to offer virtual education for all subjects from grades 4 to 12, which will enhance programming and increase flexibility of delivery. Students will augment their education through a virtual platform to allow flexibility in pursuing their fine arts or sports interests.
Northern Gateway Regional Division No. 10				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
76	10500 Outreach/ Alternative Education Program (O/A)	170 Students/ Grades 10 to 12	6	Offer alternative high school programming to at-risk students to meet their differing learning styles and lifestyle needs focusing on improving student retention and course/high school completion.
77	30058 Engaging 7–12 Students for Academic Achievement	2500 Students/ Grades 7 to 12	7	Differentiate instruction and assessment strategies to enhance student engagement and math and science understanding, and focus professional development on enhancing and improving teaching and learning.
Northern Lights School Division No. 69				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
78	30244 Cultural Dance	300 Students/ Grades 4 to 12	5	Engage First Nations, Métis and Inuit students in becoming part of the school culture and give them a sense of belonging by offering dance instruction as a component of the fine arts and by using cultural dance instructors to focus on traditional Métis dance and act as consultants for integrating Aboriginal dance into the curriculum and daily physical education classes.
Northland School Division No. 61				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
79	376 Performance Assessments and Jurisdiction PAT Improvement	2130 Students/ Grades 1 to 12	23	Provide professional development on assessment strategies and instructional/ administrative best practices.

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Parkland School Division No. 70				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
80	10272 TRI-S: Success for Secondary Students	4708 Students/ Grades 7 to 12	17	Initiate projects that will address the identification of "noncompleters" and removal of barriers to high school completion.
81	30520 Improved Student Learning Through Assessment	9500 Students/ Grades K to 12	22	Work collaboratively in staff-, parent-, and student-selected focus areas related to student assessment using a Professional Learning Community structure. Staff professional development and sharing of best practices will inform teachers of highly effective assessment strategies. Work with students and parents to inform them of how assessment practices can positively influence the learning process.
Pembina Hills Regional Division No. 7				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
82	30116 Student Engagement	120 Students/ Grades 4 to 10	17	Establish a profile of the disengaged student, provide strategic interventions and strategies to address the needs of the identified group of students and appoint School Success Teams to engage in opportunities to learn how to improve school culture.
83	30123 Distance Education Student Assessment	1800 Students/ Grades 1 to 12	1	Focus on assessment to design distance education courseware, gauge student learning, and identify students who may need specific instructional supports to succeed. Provide for collaborative working groups to infuse assessment for learning techniques throughout whole courses all at once.
Prairie Land Regional Division No. 25				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
84	10081 Safe and Caring Schools	710 Students/ Grades 4 to 12	3	Implement the "Safe and Caring Schools Project" as a means of encouraging socially responsible and respectful behaviour.
Prairie Rose School Division No. 8				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
85	10040 Improving Learning in PRRD	3205 Students/ Grades K to 12	35	Establish Professional Learning Communities to build teacher capacity with a focus on curriculum implementation, technology, differentiated learning, literacy, numeracy and student resiliency.

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	Red Deer Catholic Regional Division No. 39			
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
86	10307 Divisional Intervention, Support and Response Program	5600 Students/ Grades pre-K to 12	14	Provide ongoing academic, emotional, mental, social, physical and spiritual support directed toward student resiliency and wellness within the school and community and in future life prospects.
87	30040 Career Connections: Exploring Career Pathways	3350 Students/ Grades 7 to 12	10	Develop a systematic approach to career awareness and career planning by utilizing a career specialist and career consultants to work with middle and high schools, by establishing career centres, and by providing teachers with professional development, resources and the opportunity for information sharing. A comprehensive division career development plan will promote career development to students, teachers, parents, counsellors and the community-at-large.
88	30043 Learning Strategies for Academic Success	450 Students/ Grades 1 to 3	7	Develop a structure, outside of the regular classroom, to meet the needs of academically at-risk students focusing on Individualized Program Plan development, differentiated instruction techniques, modified curriculum and Pyramid of Intervention strategies. Enhance teacher capacity using a professional development model that educates staff on different methods to meet the needs of academically at-risk students.
	Red Deer Public School District No. 104			
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
89	30196 Enhancing Teaching and Learning Through Effective Assessment	9660 Students/ Grades pre-K to 12	20	Encourage a cultural shift in assessment practices to create a more consistent approach across the district and enhance teacher capacity for addressing diverse student learning needs utilizing the support of an assessment expert, lead teachers and professional learning teams.
	Rocky View School Division No. 41			
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
90	30173 Excellence in Learning	14950 Students/ Grades K to 12	40	Provide a framework for all schools that allows for individual teachers to examine the assessment for learning strategies, implement those assessment strategies that are most appropriate for their context, refine instructional practice and ultimately provide evidence of student progress.
	St. Albert Protestant Separate School District No. 6			
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
91	10010 Learning for All: Student Academic Support Junior High	800 Students/ Grades 7 to 9	4	Establish Professional Learning Communities to build teacher capacity focusing on important curricular outcomes in core subject areas, common instructional and assessment materials, and to develop and implement strategies and systems to effectively meet student needs.

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92	30002 Supporting At-risk Students	3532 Students Grades 7 to 12	5	Develop specific/systematic systems to identify students at-risk and create necessary supports; work together collaboratively to share learnings, tools and strategies.
St. Paul Education Regional Division No. 1				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope(# schools)*	*Project Description*
93	10111 The Circle of Understanding	1300 Students/ Grades K to 12	11	Establish programs/initiatives to recognize and eliminate cross-cultural barriers. Provide for the learning needs of Aboriginal students in culturally appropriate ways throughout the curriculum by seeking best practices and means of incorporating elements of Aboriginal culture and traditions into the curriculum, thereby increasing the attendance, retention and grade completion rates of Aboriginal students.
94	10113 Educational Community Success: Student Support	4000 Students/ Grades K to 12	18	Establish Professional Learning Communities to build teacher capacity focusing on strategies for improved student self-concept and student achievement.
95	30084 Increased High School Completion Rates	900 Students/ Grades 10 to 12	10	Provide opportunities for schools to address the identification and removal of barriers to high school completion, focusing on guidance and counselling, increased student and parent involvement, positive school climate and assessment for learning strategies, and to ensure that students have the programs, services and supports needed to stay in school and complete courses.
Sturgeon School Division No. 24				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
96	342 Multi-Instructional Resource Room (MIRR)	900 Students/ Grades 10 to 12	1	Create a resource room to respond to different student learning styles and needs and to increase students' abilities to take courses that do not fit in their timetables.
97	10527 Empowering Student Success	4900 Students/ Grades K to 12	11	Modify and transform the division's critical underlying structural and systemic elements through a comprehensive, concentrated and integrated school and system-wide focus on instruction involving all students in all schools and central office. The project is supported and empowered by four action-based pillars: 1) quality teaching, 2) integrated planning and reporting, 3) coherent staff development that relates directly to the goals and strategies, and 4) building shared and distributive leadership capacity.
98	30263 Improving HS Achievement Through Reading and Study Skills	940 Students/ Grades 10 to 12	1	Use a variety of strategies (e.g., reading across the curriculum, study skills model, 21 Keys for High Performance Teaching and Learning, Start Now, Pyramids of Intervention) within differentiated instruction and assessment classrooms.

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The Cornerstone Christian Academy of Camrose				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
99	30345 Senior High Multimedia-assisted Partnerships	20 Students/ Grades 10 to 12	1	Develop an online course delivery option for students in high school who wish to complete courses by partnering with Alberta Distance Learning Centre to provide courses on a team teaching basis.
Wild Rose School Division No. 66				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
100	591 Improving Career Planning and Preparation	150 Students/ Grades 9 to 12	1	Provide a career research library, an office for the Work Experience/RAP coordinator and a student portfolio library to emphasize career development throughout the school.
101	4442 Exploring Strategies for Teaching and Assessment	5420 Students/ Grades K to 12	20	Provide staff professional development to explore strategies for teaching and assessment.
Wolf Creek School Division No. 72				
	Project Details	*Project Scope (# Students/Grades)*	*Project Scope (# schools)*	*Project Description*
102	109 Junior High Resource Room/Mentorship Program: Bent	8 Students/ Grades 7 to 10	1	Offer a mentorship program to assist students with reading, organization, homework and study skills.
103	115 Reading Intervention: Eckville Junior Senior High	40 Students/ Grades 7 to 12	1	Offer an intensive reading program.
104	117 Late Literacy: Lacombe Composite HS	500 Students/ Grades 10 to 12	1	Revise and extend a modified, reading-based curriculum (Reading 10, Humanities 13, 23, 33) use the Auto Skills Reading Program to improve students reading below grade level.

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XII. Web Sites

Government of Alberta Web Sites

- **Alberta Initiative for School Improvement:** *http://education.alberta.ca/admin/aisi/aisidocs/what.aspx*
- **High School Completion in Alberta:** *education.alberta.ca/department/ipr/highschoolcompletion.aspx.*
- **Planning for High School Completion.** *http://alis.alberta.ca/et/ep/high-schoolcomp.html.*

Other Web Sites

Please note: The following Web site references are provided as examples and do not imply Alberta Education's approval for the use of these resources. Administrators need to review these sites and assess their appropriateness before using them or recommending them to others.

- **Communities in Schools** is a community-based organization that helps kids stay-in-school and prepare for life. For more than 30 years, it has championed the connection of needed community resources with schools. *www.communitiesinschools.org.*
- The **Education Alliance,** a department at Brown University, promotes educational change to provide all students with equitable opportunities to succeed. The Alliance advocates for populations whose access to excellent education has been limited or denied. *http://www.alliance.brown.edu/.*
- The **Harvard University Centre on the Developing Child** was founded on the belief that society's vitality and sustainability depend on equalizing opportunities early in life for all children to achieve their full potential and engage in responsible and productive citizenship. *http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu/content/pulications.html.*
- The **IES What Works Clearinghouse** (US Department of Education, Institute of Education) is a central and trusted source of scientific evidence for what works in education. *http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/reports/dropout/topic/references.asp.*
- The **Innovation Unit** (National College for School Leadership) is a not-for-profit organization that serves as a catalyst for innovation and improvement in education. It draws on a wide range of expertise from both the public and private sectors and works on diversified projects, covering every aspect of school life that has the potential to raise standards. *http://www.innovation-unit.co.uk/.*
- The **Johns Hopkins University Talent Development High School Program** is a comprehensive model for large high schools that face serious problems with student attendance, discipline, achievement scores and dropout rates. The model consists of specific changes in school organization and management to establish a strong, positive school climate for learning, curricular and instructional innovations; for parent and community involvement activities to encourage post-secondary awareness; and for professional development systems to support the implementation of recommended reforms. *http://web.jhu.edu/CSOS/tdhs/about/model.html.*
- **MENTOR** is an organization that promotes and advocates for mentors and mentoring initiatives worldwide. The Research in Action series contains 10 issues on some of the most pressing topics facing the youth mentoring field. *www.mentoring.org/.*
- The mission of the **National Dropout Prevention Center/Network** is to increase high school graduation rates through research- and evidenced-based solutions. *http://www.dropoutprevention.org/ndpcdefault.htm*

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Your Key to Success: Administrator's Guide to Raising Alberta's High School Completion Rate

The Alberta High School Completion Framework supports five key strategies:

1 Personalized Learning

2 Successful Transitions

3 Collaborative Partnerships

4 Positive Connections

5 Tracking Progress

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